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The following story by James Payn is commended to the attention of all those whose young relatives are afflicted with a passion for gambling. It contains an admirable recipe for the cure of this insidious disease.

A FAITHFUL RETAINER.

When I lived in the country—which was a long time ago—our nearest neighbors were the Luscombes. They were very great personages in the county, though not, so far as I could discern, for any particular reason, except from their having been there for several generations. People are supposed to improve, like wine, from keeping—even if they are rather "ordinary" at starting; and the Luscombes, at the time I knew them, were considered quite a "Vintage" family. They had begun in Charles II.'s time, and dated their descent from greatness in the female line. That they had managed to keep a great estate not very much impaired so long was certainly a proof of great cleverness, since there had been many spendthrifts among them; but fortunately there had been a miser or two who had restored the average, and their fortunes.

Mr. Roger Luscombe, the present proprietor, was neither the one nor the other, but he was inclined to frugality, and no wonder; a burnt child dreads the fire even though he may have had nothing to do with lighting it himself, and his father had kicked down a good many thousands with the help of "the bones" (as dice were called in his day) and "the Devil's books" (which was the name for cards with those who disapproved of them) and race-horses; there was plenty left, but it made the old gentleman careful. There was no stint, however, of any kind at the court, which to me, who lived in the little Vicarage of Dalton with my father, seemed a palace.

It was indeed a very fine place, with statues in the hall, and pictures in the gallery, and peacocks on the

terrace; Lady Jane, the daughter of a wealthy peer, who had almost put things on their old footing with her ample dowry, was a very great lady, and had been used, I was told, to an even more splendid home; but to me, who had no mother, she was simply the kindest and most gracious woman I had ever known.

My connection with the Luscombes arose from their only son Richard being my father's pupil. We were both brought up at home, but for very different reasons. In my case it was from economy; the living was small and our family was large, though, as it happened, I had no brothers. Richard was too precious to his parents to be trusted to the tender mercies of a public school. He was in delicate health, not so much natural to him as caused by an excess of care—coddling. Though he and I were very good friends, unless when we were quarrelling, it must be owned that he was a spoilt boy.

There is a good deal of nonsense talked of young gentlemen who are brought up from their cradle in an atmosphere of flattery not being spoilt; but unless they are angels—which is a very exceptional case—it cannot be otherwise. Richard Luscombe was a good fellow in many ways; liberal with his money (indeed, apt to be too lavish) and kind-hearted, but self-willed, effeminate, and impulsive. He had also—which was a source of great alarm and grief to his father—a marked taste for speculation.

After the age of "alley taws and commonayes," of albert-rock and hard-bake, in which we both gambled frightfully, I could afford him no opportunities of gratifying this passion; but if he could get a little money "on" anything, there was nothing that pleased him better; not that he cared for the money, but for the delight of winning it. The next moment he would have given it away to a beggar.

When he was about 16, he and I had driven over to some little county races, a few miles away from Dalton, without, I fear, announcing our intention of so doing. Fresh air was good for "our dear Richard," and since pedestrian exercise (which he also hated) ex-

hausted him, he had a groom and dog-cart always at his own disposal. It was a day of great excitement for me, who had never before seen a race-course. The flags, the grand stand (a rude erection of planks, which came down, by-the-bye, the next year during the race for the cup, and reduced the sporting population), the insinuating gypsies, the bawling card sellers, and especially the shining horses with their twisted manes, all excited my admiration.

I was well acquainted with them in fiction; and these illustrations of the books I loved so well, delighted me. Richard, who had read less and seen more, was bent on business.

He was tall for his age, but very slight and youthful-looking, and the contrast of his appearance with those of the company in the little ring, composed as it was of a choice selection of the roughest blackguards in England, was very striking.

Many of these knew who he was, and were very glad to see him, but only one of the bookmakers secured his patronage. The fact was, Master Richard had but one five-pound note to lay—he had been saving up his pocket-money for weeks for this very purpose, and he took ten to one about an outsider, "Don Sebastian"—I shall remember that name when all other historical knowledge has departed from me—not because he knew anything of the horse, but because the longest odds were laid against him.

I didn't like the look of the "gentleman sportsman" who took custody of that 5*l.* note, but Richard (who had never seen him before) assured me, with his usual confidence, that he was "straight as a die" and "as honest as the day."

The race excited me exceedingly; Richard had lent me a field-glass (for everything he had was in duplicate, if not in triplicate), and I watched the progress of that running rainbow with a beating heart; at first "Yellow Cap" (the Don) seemed completely out of it, the last of all, but presently he began to creep up, and as they drew near the winning post, shouts of "Yellow Cap

wins!" "Yellow Cap wins!" rent the air. He did win by a head, and with a well-pleased flush on my face at my friend's marvellous good fortune, I turned to congratulate him. He was gone. The tumult and confusion were excessive, but looking toward the exit gate, I just caught a glimpse of the bookmaker passing rapidly through it, and then of Richard in pursuit of him.

A stout young farmer, whom I knew, was standing behind me, and in a few hurried words I told him what had happened. "Come with me," he said, and off we ran, as though we had been entered for the cup ourselves. The other two were already a field ahead, and far away from the course; but fast as the bookmaker ran, the delicate Richard had come up with him. I could imagine how pumped he was, but the idea of having been swindled by this scoundrel, who was running off with his five-pound note, as well as with the fifty pounds he owed him, had no doubt lent him wings. It could not, however, lend him strength, nor teach him the art of self-defense, and after a few moments, passed doubtless in polite request and blunt refusal, we saw the miscreant strike out from the shoulder and Richard fall.

The time thus lost, however, short-lived as was the combat, was fatal to the victor. There were few better runners in Dalton than my companion and myself, and we gained on the bookmaker (who had probably trained on gin and bad tobacco) hand over hand. As we drew near him, he turned round and inquired, with many expletives, made half inarticulate by want of breath, what we wanted with a gentleman engaged on his own private affairs.

"Well," I said, for, as I could trust my agricultural friend with the more practical measures that were likely to follow, I thought it only fair that I should do the talking, "we want first the five-pound note which that young gentleman (whom you have just knocked down) entrusted to your care, and then the fifty you have lost to him."

He called Heaven to witness that he had never made a bet in his life with any young gentleman; but that, having been molested, he believed by a foot-pad, as he was returning home to his family, he had been compelled to defend himself.

"I heard you make the bet, and saw you take the money," I remarked, with confidence.

"That's good enough," said the farmer. "Now if you don't shell out that money this instant, I'll have you back in the ring in a brace of shakes and tell them what has happened. Last year they tore a Welsher pretty nigh to pieces, and this year (if you don't 'part') they'll do it quite."

The bookmaker turned livid—I never saw a man in such a funk in my life—and produced a greasy pocket-book, out of which he took Richard's bank-note, and ten quite new ones, and I noticed there were more left (so that poverty was not his excuse for fraud).

"Let me look at 'em against the sun," said the farmer, "to see as the water-mark is all right."

This was a precaution I should never have thought of, and it gave me for the first time a sense of the great intelligence of my father's parishioner.

"Yes; they're all correct. And now you may go, but if ever you show your face again on Southick (Southwick) race course, it will be the worse for you."

He slunk away, and we returned to Richard, who was sitting on the ground, looking at his nose, which was bleeding and had attained vast dimensions.

"Did you get the money?" were his first words, which I thought very characteristic.

"Yes, there it is, Squire—ten fivers and your own note."

"Very good; I should never have seen a shilling of it but for you and Charley, so we'll just divide it into three shares."

The farmer said "No," but eventually took his 16*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*, and quite right too. Of course I did not take Richard's money, but he afterwards bought me a rifle with it, which I could not refuse. The farmer, as may

well be imagined, could be trusted to say nothing of our adventure; but it was impossible to hide Richard's nose. He was far too honest a fellow to tell a lie about it, and the whole story came out. His father was dreadfully shocked at it, and Lady Jane in despair—the one about his gambling propensities, and the other about his nose; she thought, if the injury did not prove fatal, he would be disfigured for life. He was well in a week, but the circumstances had the gravest consequences. It was decided that something must be done with the heir of the Luscombes to wean him from low company (this did not mean me, but grooms and racing people), but even this predilection was ascribed in part to his fragile constitution. A fashionable physician came down from London to consider the case. He could not quite be brought to the point desired by Lady Jane, to lay Richard's love of gambling at the door of the delicacy of his lungs; but he was brought very near it. The young fellow, his "opinion" was, had been brought up too much like a hot-house flower; his tastes were what they were chiefly because he had had no opportunities of forming better ones; with improved strength his moral nature would become more elevated. That he was truthful was a great source of satisfaction (this was with reference to his distinct refusal to give up gambling to please anybody), and a most wholesome physical sign. "My recommendation is that he should be temporarily removed from his present dull surroundings; there is not scope in them for his mind; he should be sent abroad for a month or two with his tutor. That will do him a world of good."

If it was not very good advice, it was probably quite as judicious as other "opinions" for which 150 guineas have been cheerfully paid. It was at all events a great comfort to hear that there was nothing constitutionally wrong with "dearest Richard," and that he only wanted a tonic for mind and body. The doctor's verdict was accepted by both parents, but there was an insurmountable obstacle to its being carried into effect in Master Richard himself. My father could not leave his parish

and his family, and with no other tutor could the young gentleman be induced to go.

Now it happened that the butler at the Luscombes', John Maitland, who, as often happens in such households, had the gravity and dignity of a bishop, was so fortunate as to be a favorite both with the old folks and the young one. He really was a superior person, and not only "honest as the day" in Richard's eyes (which, as we have seen, was not a guarantee of straightforwardness), but in those of every one else. He had been born in the village; had been page to Mr. Luscombe's father, and had lived more than fifty years at the court. The relations between master and servant were feudal, mingled with the more modern attachment that comes of good service properly appreciated. He thought the Luscombes, if not the only old family in the world, the best; and worshipped—though in dignified and ecclesiastical manner—the ground trodden on both by the Squire and Master Richard. My own impression was that, under pretence of giving way to the latter, he played into the parental hands; but as it was certainly for my young friend's good, I never communicated my suspicions to him. Maitland, at all events, had more influence over him than any man except my father. Still it astonished us all not a little, notwithstanding the high opinion we entertained of him, when we heard that the butler was to be entrusted with the guardianship of Richard abroad. Such a thing could not have happened in any other family, but so it was arranged; and partly as valet, partly as confidential companion and treasurer, Maitland started with his young master on his travels.

These were to last for not less than six months; and Italy, because of its warm climate, was the country to which they were bound. That it would do the young fellow good, both moral and physical, we all hoped; but my father had his doubts. He feared that Maitland's influence over his companion would wane when away from the court; but it never entered into his mind that he would willingly permit of any wrongdoing, and

still less that the man would himself succumb to any temptation that involved dishonesty.

They travelled by easy stages; though they used the railway, of course they did so only for a few hours a day, and got out and remained at places of interest. Richard was very amenable and, indeed, showed no desire for dissipation; his one weakness—that of "having a flutter"—had no opportunity of being gratified, and Maitland wrote home the most gratifying letters, not only respecting the behavior of his charge, but of the improvement in his health. As they drew near to Italy, Richard observed one day that he should spend a day or two at Monte Carlo. Maitland had never heard of the place or of its peculiar attractions; and "Master Richard" only told him that it was very picturesque. The horror of the faithful retainer may therefore be imagined when he found that it was a gambling resort.

He could not prevent his young master from frequenting the tables, and though he kept the purse, with the exception of a few pounds, and would certainly have stood between him and ruin, he could not prevent him from winning. Richard had the luck, and more, that proverbially attends young people; his few napoleons swelled to a great many on the very first day, and he was in the seventh heaven of happiness. The next day and the next he won largely—immensely; in vain Maitland threatened to write to his father, and even to leave him. "All right," replied the reckless youth. "You may do as you like; even if the governor disinherits me, I can make my fortune by stopping here; and as to leaving me, go by all means; I shall get on very well with a French valet." It was dreadful.

Richard grew happier and happier every day, as the golden flood flowed in upon him; but also extremely hectic. He passed the whole day at the tables, and the want of air and exercise, and, still more, the intense excitement which possessed him, began to have the most serious effect. That prescription of "seeing the world," and "escaping from his dull surroundings," was having a very different result from what had been

expected. "The paths of glory lead but to the grave;" the young Englishman and his luck were the talk of all Monte Carlo, and he enjoyed his notoriety very much; but, as the poor butler plaintively observed, what was the good of that, when Master Richard was "killing his-self"?

How the news was received at the court I had no means of judging, for the Squire kept a rigid silence, except that he had long conferences with my father, and Lady Jane kept her room; it was a very sore subject, and, indeed, the news from Maitland was most alarming. The Squire wanted to start for Monte Carlo at once; but he was singularly insular, detested travel, and in truth was very unfit for such a "cutting-out expedition" as was contemplated. He waited, half out of his mind with anxiety, but in hopes of a better report; what he hoped for was that luck would turn, and Richard lose every shilling.

The very reverse of this, however, took place: Richard won more and more. He would come home to his hotel in the evening with a porter carrying his gains. His portmanteau was full of napoleons. It was characteristic of him that he never thought of banking it. One evening he came in with very bright eyes, but a most shrunken and cadaverous face. "This has been my best day of all, Johnny," he said. "See, I have won two thousand pounds; and you shall have a hundred of it." But Maitland refused to have anything to do with such ill-gotten gains, for which, too, his young master was sacrificing his health and perhaps his life. Still—though this did not strike Richard till afterward—he could not help regarding the great heap of gold with considerable interest. Added to the lad's previous gains, the amount was now very large indeed—more than five thousand pounds.

"I should really think, Master Richard, as you had now won enough."

"Enough? Certainly not. I have not broken the bank yet. I mean to do that before I've done with it, Johnny."

"That will be after you've killed yourself," said honest John.

"Well, then I shall die rich," was the reckless rejoinder. Richard, who was too exhausted for repose, tossed and tumbled on his bed for hours, and eventually dropped into a heavy slumber, and slept far into the next morning. He awoke feeling very unwell, but his chief anxiety was lest he should miss the opening of the tables; he was always the first to begin. He rang the bell violently for Maitland. There was no reply, and when he rang again, one of the hotel servants came up.

"Where is my man?" he inquired.

"Monsieur's man-servant took monsieur's luggage to the railway station; he is gone by the early train to Turin."

"Gone to Turin with my luggage?"

"Yes, with the two portmanteaus—very heavy ones."

Richard got out of bed and dragged his weary limbs into the dressing-room, an inner apartment where the portmanteaus were kept for safety. They were both gone.

"What train did the scoundrel go by? Where is my watch? Why, the villain has taken that too! Send for the police! No, there is no time to be lost—send a telegram. Why, he has not even left me money enough to pay a telegram!" All his small change was gone. Honest John had taken everything: he had not left his young master a single sixpence. At this revelation of the state of affairs, poor Richard, weakened as he was by his long excitement, threw himself on the bed and burst into tears. The attendant, to whom, as usual, he had been liberal, was affected by an emotion so strange in an Englishman.

"Monsieur must not fret; the thief will be caught and the money restored. It would be well, perhaps to tell the maître d'hôtel."

The master of the hotel appeared with a very grave face. He was desolated to hear of the misfortune that had befallen his young guest. Perhaps there was not quite so much taken as had been reported.

"I tell you it's all gone; more than five thousand pounds, and my watch and chain; I have not half-a-franc in my possession."

"That is unfortunate indeed," said the maître d'hôtel, looking graver than ever, "because there is my bill to settle."

"Oh, hang your bill!" cried Richard. "That will be all right. I must telegraph to my father at once."

"But how is monsieur to telegraph if he has no money?"

It was probably the first time in his life that the young fellow had ever understood how inconvenient is poverty. What also amazed him beyond measure was the man's manner: yesterday, and all other days, it had been polite to obsequiousness; now it was dry almost to insolence. It seemed indeed to imply some doubt of the good faith of his guest—that he might not, in short, be much better than honest John himself, of whom he might be the confederate; that the whole story was a trumped-up one, to account for the inability to meet his bill. As to his having won largely at the tables, that might be true enough; but he also might have lost it all, and more with it; money changes hands at Monte Carlo very rapidly.

In the end, however, and not without much objection, the landlord advanced a sufficient sum to enable Richard to telegraph home. He also permitted him to stay on at the hotel, stipulating, however, that he should call for no wine, nor indulge in anything expensive, a humiliating arrangement enough, but not so much so as the terms of another proviso, that he was never to enter the gambling saloon or go beyond the public gardens. Even there he was under surveillance, and it was, in short, quite clear that he was suspected of an intention to run away without paying his bill—perhaps even of joining his "confederate," Mr. John Maitland. The only thing that comforted Richard was the conviction that he should have a remittance from his father in a few hours; but nothing of the sort, not even a telegram arrived. Day after day went by, and

the young fellow was in despair; he felt like a pariah, for he had been so occupied with the tables that he had made no friends; and his few acquaintances looked askance at him, as being under a cloud, with the precise nature of which they were unacquainted. Friendless and penniless in a foreign land, his spirit was utterly broken, and he began to understand what a fool he had made of himself; especially how unfilially he had behaved to his father, without whom it was not so easy to get on, it appeared, as he had imagined. He saw, too, the evil of his conduct in having thrust a temptation in the way of honest John too great to be resisted. The police could hear no news of him, and indeed seemed very incredulous with respect to Richard's account of the matter.

On the fourth day Richard received a letter from his father of the gravest kind, though expressed in the most affectionate terms. He hardly alluded to the immediate misfortune that had happened to him, but spoke of the anxiety and alarm which his conduct had caused his mother and himself. "I enclose you a cheque," he wrote, "just sufficient to comfortably bring you home and pay your hotel bill, and exceedingly regret that I cannot trust my son with more—lest he should risk it in a way that gives his mother and myself more distress of mind than I can express."

Richard's heart was touched, as it well might have been; though, perhaps, the condition of mind in which his father's communication found him had something to do with it. By that night's mail he dispatched a letter home which gave the greatest delight at the court, and also at the vicarage, for Mr. Luscombe, full of pride and joy, brought it to my father to read. "I have been very foolish, sir, and very wicked," it ran. "I believe I should have been dead by this time had not Maitland stolen my money (so that I have no reason to feel very angry with him) and deprived me of the means of suicide. I give you my word of honor that I will never gamble again."

Lady Jane sent a telegram to meet him in Paris to

say what a dear good boy he was, and how happy he had made her. This did not surprise him, but what did astonish him very much on arriving at the court was that John Maitland opened the door for him.

"Why, you old scoundrel!"

"Yes, sir, I know; I'm a thief and all that, but I did it for the best; I did, indeed."

Though the fatted calf was killed for Master Richard, he had by no means returned like the prodigal son. On the contrary, he had sent home as it were a remittance by the butler of more than 5,000*l.* The whole plot had been devised by honest John as the only method of extricating Master Richard from that Monte Carlo spider's web, and had been carried out by the help of the maître d'hôtel, with the Squire's approval. And to do the young fellow justice, he never resented the trick that had been played upon him.

He was not sent abroad, but to Cambridge, where eventually he took a fourth class (poll) degree; and Lady Jane was as proud of it as if he had been senior wrangler. He kept his word, in spite of all temptations to the contrary, and never touched a card; a circumstance which drove him to take a fair amount of exercise, and, in consequence, he steadily improved in health. He was sometimes chaffed by his companions for his abstinence from play. They should have thought he was the last man to be afraid of losing his money. "You are right so far," he would answer, drily; "but the fact is, I have had enough of winning." To which they would reply, "Oh, yes, we dare say," an elliptical expression which conveyed disbelief. He never told them the story of his Monte Carlo experiences; but in the vacations he would often talk to honest John about them. We may be sure that that faithful retainer did not go unrewarded for his fraudulent act.

This sad but beautiful story is by Walter Besant, and first appeared in *Longman's Magazine*. Its moral is as awful and as inevitable as any that Victor Hugo, Tolstoi, George Eliot or Stevenson has everembodied in fiction.

ALL FOR LOVE.

I stood to-day beside the grave of my dear old friend Paul—(his name will be known by his friends, and for those who were not his friends his name may remain unknown). The vicar read the funeral services while the birds were singing on the trees, the sun shone on the laburnum and the lilac, and from below the cliff came the roll of the waves along the shore. His remains were laid beside those of his wife, and while the words of the solemn service fell upon my ears, I was thinking how it would have fared with Paul had it not been for his marriage. It will harm no one now to tell the story of that marriage.

When first he met his wife, in the year 1857, he was —well, he was twenty-five years of age, to begin with. It seems as if merely to be twenty-five is enough, but I suppose some other things are desirable as well. He had just been called to the bar, he was a fellow of his college, a hard-headed reader, and an athlete. He was popular, because he possessed a pleasant voice, a pleasant face, and a pleasant manner, because he was not small and petty in speech or thought, and because he was strong. Nobody among undergraduates is so popular as the man who is strong. Further, in order to acquire facility in speaking, he spoke regularly at the Union, and learned to speak well. Whatever he attempted, he either did well or abandoned altogether.

I have said that in the year 1857 Paul was twenty-five years of age. It was in that year that he took the step which subsequently led to his early retirement. And it happened in this way:

In the month of September we started together upon

a walking expedition. In those days we had a project for walking round the coast of Great Britain, taking a fortnight here and another there, according to season and opportunity, and reckoning that we should complete the task—allowing for sinuosities and creeks—in 373 years exactly. We carried a white round pebble. At the end of each walk we buried it, and marked the place; at the beginning of a new walk we dug it up again. By this method one was quite sure of passing over the whole ground without the possibility of self-deception. We began very well, with capital weather and high spirits. On the afternoon of the third day an accident happened of a very common and uninteresting nature. Paul twisted his ankle on a loose stone. We were then about a mile-and-a-half distant from a certain small village through which we had to pass, but we had not intended to rest a night there. When we reached it, however, the trouble of the ankle became so bad that it was absolutely necessary to stop. Fortunately we found a decent inn, with better accommodation than might have been expected. It was an old thatched and rustic village public house, to which had been built a new modern wing containing three or four bed-rooms, a coffee-room, and a billiard-room.

After laying my man upon the sofa in the coffee-room, I went out to explore the place. It was more considerable than I had expected; there was a single long street running up a gentle hill from the seashore; on the top of the hill was a church with an ancient square rubble tower and a square brick "temple" of the period of George II.; beyond the church were two roads, and beside them certain villas, which looked very pretty amid the woods, and trees, and gardens. At the lower end of the town was the port. Here the sea runs inland, and makes a little creek for the reception of a stream; they have built out a brick jetty and constructed a wharf, along which are generally lying half-a-dozen small vessels. On the right of the creek there rose a bold headland, such as are so common on the white coasts of Albion; on the left the land was low

for a mile or two, and then rose gradually, and there was a great bay with a sweep of cliff after cliff, very beautiful. As I looked there came swiftly round the headland a little boat—not a common dingy or fishermen's boat, but a miniature yacht—quite a dainty little craft, flying foresail and mainsail. A girl was steering her, and a boy sat beside the masthead, to lower sail. The boat ran merrily up the creek alongside the jetty. The boy lowered sail, unshipped mast and rudder, and tied the painter with the quickness of him who understands his work. Then both sprang out and ran up the steps of the jetty, and one of the fishermen touched his hat, and went slowly down to take the boat to her moorings. The pair were clearly brother and sister; he a lad of eighteen, she a year or two older, perhaps twenty-one. They were curiously alike, and the girl's face was her brother's glorified. There is no other word which can express the difference between the two faces. She had the same face as her brother, but glorified. Thus, the boy's hair was light and curly, hers was darker; his eyes were a light blue, and hers a dark blue and deeper; his mouth was weak, and hers was strong; in her walk and bearing there was more strength and character than seemed to belong to her brother. All these things I did not observe at the moment when she passed quickly up the pier, but I found them out afterward. As for her figure, she was nearly as tall as her brother, who was certainly five feet eight, and in shape she resembled the goddess Artemis, who was of thinner and slighter build and had a more slender waist than Aphrodite. Her admirers, in fact, invented the corset and the practice of tight-lacing.

In the evening, after dinner, we took refuge in the billiard-room, as there was nothing at all in the house to read. The only occupant of the room was the young fellow whom I had seen in the boat with the extraordinarily beautiful girl. He was knocking the balls about for amusement. There was no marker. I observed that he blushed violently when I invited him to play a game—more violently, that is, than a boy of

eighteen ought to blush. He accepted, however, and we played five games, Paul watching the play in a chair. Presently we began to talk about the village. The boy said that, partly because it was eight miles from a station, and partly because there were no lodgings except at the inn, visitors very rarely found their way to the place. As for society, he said, blushing crimson—we could not say why—a few people lived in the villas beyond the church outside the little town—his own people among them; but it was a very dull and quiet place. For his own part—but here he blushed again, and did not complete his sentence.

"For your own part," said Paul, "you desire to hear nothing but the beating of the waves on the shore and the cry of the sea-birds all your life."

"And yet," the boy replied, with a touch of sadness in his voice, "I do not know how I am to get anything else. But that does not matter to you," he added quickly. Then, as if afraid of saying more than he desired to say, he wished us good night, and went away.

"Why can't he expect anything else?" Paul asked. "The boy wants to go to sea, I suppose, or on the stage, or into the army, or to become a poet, or to do something which his father won't let him do. He's a pretty pink-and-white sort of boy; sometimes they turn out well, that sort of make. And he's a gentleman. Well, I shall go and put a compress on my ankle. Help me up stairs, old man."

He went up stairs and I returned to the coffee-room. It was then about 10 o'clock. The place was so quiet and still that the silence oppressed me.

Then I heard steps outside the house and in the hall, and a man appeared at the door. He peered round, saw me sitting beside a couple of candles, hesitated for a moment, and then came in. It was a public room, and I suppose he had a perfect right to use it if he pleased; but I resented his intrusion. When he took off his hat, I perceived by the light of my two candles that he was perfectly bald, that his whiskers and eyebrows were white, that his eyes were red, his lips thick,

his cheeks as fiercely red as his eyes, and his nose swollen. I declare that the very first aspect of this man made me tremble and shiver; I cannot tell why—it may have been a presentiment of mischief, yet he did no harm to me. Sometimes I have thought that this natural loathing was caused by the inexpressible wickedness of the man's face.

"I think," he said—his voice was raspy and grating—"I think that I saw young Robert Reeve leave the inn a little while ago."

"There was a young gentleman here," I replied, "who played a game of billiards with me and is gone."

"Yes, the same, the same. Nice boy, sir, ain't he?"

"He appears to be so."

"Are you a friend of his—of the family, may I ask?" He leaned forward and grinned horribly. Why did he grin? "An old friend, perhaps, of former and happier times? Yet not quite old enough, I should say——"

"I have not the pleasure of knowing them."

"Ah!" He leaned back in his chair and breathed another sigh, apparently of satisfaction. "Ah! A thousand pities for him, poor boy; but of course it is worse, much worse, for the girl. But you do not know the family yet. You would be interested——"

"Not at all," I said. "Pray do not waste village scandals upon me."

"Village scandals? My dear sir, you are greatly mistaken—greatly mistaken. It is a world-wide—why, I could tell scandals—why, I could tell you things about this village which——"

I perceived that the old fellow had been drinking, which was perhaps the cause of his familiarity and his strange confidences. However, I left him.

In the morning Paul's ankle was still swollen, and I agreed to leave him and go on with the walk alone. He, for his own part, thought he would send to town for some books and stay where he was. The place was quiet, the inn was comfortable, he should be neither lonely nor dull. I thought of the boy—this Robert Reeve, if that was the name—perhaps he would turn

up at the inn; and then I thought of the girl. There was certainly one possibility which might make a stay at this place very far from dull. But I said nothing about her.

After breakfast I strapped my knapsack and started for the solitary walk of five-and-twenty miles a day for a fortnight or so. When one is young, so many friends are made at every halt that there is no time to feel lonely.

Three weeks later, I found waiting for me, on my arrival at a certain town which was on our proposed route, a letter from Paul. It was short, and without explanation begged me to get back to him as soon as I received the letter. This request gave me an uneasy feeling.

What should Paul—Paul the Self-Reliant—want with me or with any one? If a man wanted counsel, he generally went to Paul for it, but Paul himself asked no man's counsel. It could not be that Paul was in a scrape of any kind.

It was not till nine in the evening that I reached the place. Paul was not in the inn. The landlord told me, however, that he was quite well, and that he was most probably at Mr. Reeve's. This he said with a meaning smile, and added that he would certainly be back again before 11 o'clock. I went into the coffee-room and sat down to wait.

The old bald head again, the man with the red eyes and the white eyebrows; he followed me into the coffee-room.

"Back again, my dear sir?" he began cheerfully. "Back again? I hardly expected this. Yes; I saw you drive down the street. The horse and cart belong to old Poulton, the man who burned down his own hay-ricks for the insurance. The fellow who drove you is said to be reformed. A very violent character once, and in prison many times."

I paid no attention to these revelations. He took a chair, however, called for some brandy-and-water, and went on talking.

"Strange doings!" he said—"strange doings, since you went away. Your friend, sir—ah! poor young man. Trapped, I am afraid, trapped!" He drank half his glass of brandy-and-water, and drummed the table with his fingers, repeating with great satisfaction that my poor young friend was trapped.

"Now"—I grew pretty hot at this interference, "if you have come here to tell me stories and made-up scandal, walk out of the door—or, old as you are, I shall put you out."

"Don't be violent, young man; pray don't be violent. Why, you are like your friend—I warned him a week ago—I thought it my duty to warn him—and what was the consequence? Language more rude than I thought possible for a barrister and a gentleman to employ."

"I dare say you deserved it."

"What? For warning a young man on the edge of a precipice? Oh! what a world is this! What an ungrateful world!"

"I think," I said, "that you are a very meddlesome and impertinent person. Why do you speak to me at all?"

"Because I *must* speak. Young man, if you have any friendship for your friend—the other young man who swears—drag him away."

He looked and spoke so much in earnest that I began to fear there might be some danger of an unknown and unsuspected kind.

"What danger?" I asked.

"The danger"—he leaned across the table and shook a warning forefinger in my face—"the danger of a most lamentable connection. You do not know—how should you?—the nature of this village and its residents."

I began to wonder if the man was mad, or if there was method in his madness. "This place, sir, is the refuge of those who can no longer live among their fellow-men. Here all alike have a disgraceful past, and can meet on equal terms; in fact, it would be in the highest degree unmannerly to speak of what may have happened. Some words—such as detection, pun-

ishment, justice, and the like—are never used here; be careful not to use them."

"Good heavens!"

"Why not? People must live somewhere. Surely it is best, when a man 'comes out,' to join a community of others who have either come out or been driven from society. Ah! my young friend, I have now been here six months and more, and I have as yet regarded the possession of this knowledge as a sacred secret; but to see a young gentleman trapped—I cannot longer remain silent; I cannot, indeed."

I wanted to ask him if he had recently "come out," but I forbore.

"In the very first villa outside the town," this agreeable person went on, "there lives a lady who was once tried for her life in Scotland; she got off because the verdict was *Not proven.* But she did it, my dear sir, she did it. I have read the evidence, and I think I may be allowed some experience in evidence. She did it."

"Well?"

"And on the other side of my house lives a man who was cashiered—drummed out of the army, sir, and he a major—for cowardice. Oh, yes! My house is between them."

"And what have you done?" I asked impudently.

He shook his head sadly, as if I was greatly to blame for asking so indiscreet a question.

"Opposite to us there lives an aged clergyman. Ask him—I am not a libellous person—I say only ask him why he holds no benefice *now—ask him that.* To say of *his* neighbor that he is a fraudulent bankrupt, and lives upon the profits, would not surprise you, I suppose. And of the Honorable Mr. Arthur Mompesson, another of our neighbor residents, that he was expelled all his clubs for cheating at cards, would not strike you, perhaps, as at all an unusual incident in a gentleman's career."

"But what did *you* do?" For the man was reeling out these accusations with a malignant joy which made one's brain turn. "What is it that you have done?"

He shook his head again.

"And there's another man, who made his fortune by wrecking ships, over-insuring them, and then overloading them. He is a churchwarden now—Ho! ho! And as for old Reeve, as he calls himself now, who wants to throw over his old friends, refuses to speak to me if he meets me, and has forbidden me the house—why, I defended him, sir, I defended him, and this is his gratitude."

"You—you defended him? What were you, then?"

"What was I, sir? I would have you know, sir, that I was a barrister, sir, and a Queen's counsel, sir. What do you think of that?"

"You were a barrister and a Queen's counsel. Then, why are you no longer either? What did you do?" I asked again.

He shook his head no longer, but sprang to his feet with a fierce gesture, and for a moment I thought he would have made for me.

"Why," I said, looking him steadily in the face, "if you are no longer a Q. C., what is it that you have done?"

He made no reply, but actually fled from the room; he ran out of it, and down the street, and I saw him no more.

At eleven Paul came home. He was evidently in a state of high excitement. "I sent for you," he said, "because I *must* tell some one, and I know I can trust you. Sit down and listen to me without speaking one word."

As for the substance of his tale, it was what one might have expected. He was in love, madly in love, and with the very girl, the beautiful creature, whom I had seen on the river. Her name was Isabel. The largest and finest house in the place belonged to her father, who was, it appeared, a man of considerable wealth. So far all seemed plain and easy sailing.

"You love her, Paul," I said. "No occasion to repeat it. And—if one may have the impertinence to ask —does the young lady——"

"She refuses me," he replied. All this time he had been walking about the room in a violent agitation. "She refuses me."

"Refuses you?"

"Refuses me. Mind, there is a reason. The dear girl owned to-day that if it were not for this reason—she—she——" Here he choked.

"Is the reason insurmountable?"

"Oh!" he replied. "The reason is unreasonable; it is a mere trick of the brain; it matters really nothing. I cannot tell you, though she has told me the whole, God bless her! Yet I cannot tell you all of it—only this: there is upon her past a cloud. Yes, I admit it is a very dreadful cloud. Through no fault of her own—none, mind. No one can blame her in the least; no one would dare throw it in her teeth. By heaven! I would kill such a man where he stood. It is on account of this cloud that she refuses. She says that she will never consent to bring her burden of shame to weigh down the life of a man she loves. O Isabel! my dear!" Here again he choked.

"Yet, Paul, if you would take her—even with this—this——"

"*Even with this?*" he said solemnly. "Why, it would be nothing in the world to me; less than nothing; just a secret between husband and wife; just a painful reminiscence of the past, never to be mentioned between us."

"Is there," I asked, "any one who knows the secret?"

"Her brother knows, of course, poor fellow! Well for him if he did not know, because the knowledge of it will poison his life wherever he goes. I am sorry, truly sorry, for the boy. But as for Isabel, I can take her away from all of it."

"And does no one else know?"

"There is a dreadful man who lives here—a most horrible beast. I threatened to cowhide him last week because he threw out hints that he knew something about the previous history of this family not altogether to their credit. He is a man named Brundish; he was

formerly in very good practice at the bar, was a Q. C., and a bencher of Lincoln's Inn, and was then found to have appropriated, embezzled, or made away with certain trust moneys. This was a horrible scandal, and they disbenched and disbarred him. He is a man of infamous private character, and drinks, I believe. Probably he will drink himself into the grave before long. I am afraid he knows something, but I do not know how much. What does that creature signify?"

I thought it unnecessary to tell Paul of my experience with Mr. Brundish; but I felt relieved to think that he had not told me more. We went on talking of the young lady's perfections. In fact we talked half through the night.

The next morning he took me to the house. It was a beautiful villa, furnished with admirable taste, heaped with books, pictures, and all kinds of pretty things. Isabel herself—I have always called her, by gracious permission, by her Christian name—received us, and presently her brother joined us. There was some constraint upon the whole party, which was natural under the circumstances, and I was glad when we all went out together and climbed to the top of the headland. Here, presently, I found myself—whether by accident or design I know not—standing alone with Isabel, the other two slowly going on before us down the hill. She looked grave and anxious, her cheek rather pale; I knew that her mind was full of her lover and her refusal. I had no right to speak, yet I did speak to her about it. First, I told her what Paul had told me, that he loved her and that she would not accept him, for a reason.

"Did he tell you the reason?" she asked, her cheek flushing suddenly.

"No; only in general terms. There is a cloud upon some part of your past."

"A cloud, indeed," she replied.

"Which would not in any way affect the life of the man you married."

"But it would," she said; "oh! it would. You do

not know what it is, or you would say that I am right."

"Nay, I cannot think, Miss Reeve, that you are right, for you make the man who loves you—the best man in the world—you do not know what a clever, brave, and good-hearted man he is—you make him wretched when you might make him happy." And so I continued, she shaking her head, though the tears came into her eyes, and murmuring: "Oh! I refuse him because I would not make him unhappy."

Then I said it all over again. I begged her to put this consideration out of her mind altogether, and, if she could, to make Paul happy.

She shook her head with less firmness than before, and I saw that she was shaken.

When we walked back to the house, the boy came with me, and Paul walked beside Isabel.

"I wish it may come off," he said, blushing as usual. "I say—I know I can talk freely with you, because Paul says so. He has told you something about us—hasn't he? Not much, he says, but I dare say it is quite enough. Isabel wrote it all down, so that he should not think he had been deceived—all, she says—everything. Good God!" here he gasped. "If Paul likes to show it to you, he may. But I hope he will not. As for me, I am done for; I can do nothing; the history is round my neck like a millstone; I must sit in the background all my life, and make myself as little conspicuous as I can. I cannot go into the army or the university. I have not been to a public school. I have no friends, and I can make none. I can never marry." Here he stopped for a while, and walked on at a great rate, swinging his arms.

"As for Isabel," he went on, "it really cannot matter to her when once she is married. Paul will take her away; no one will trouble their heads to ask who she was. If she can once be got to think that it will not do him mischief, I think she will give in. And, oh! I cannot bear to think that she should stay on here, wasted, her life spoiled; living in vain."

She had already given in, though we did not know it. The word was spoken, and she was promised. I saw it in her blushing face and softened eyes when we reached the house; I saw it in Paul's absurdly triumphant air when we walked away.

"It is settled," he said, pressing my arm. "She has accepted me. My dear boy! I am the happiest man in the world."

He went on to explain at great length how very happy he was already, and how very much happier he meant to be in the immediate future. They were to be married at once—in a few weeks; there was no need to wait; and so on. Meantime there was a small dinner party at the house that evening, and I was invited by Isabel.

In the nature of things it was impossible that I could avoid being interested not only in the love-affair of my friend and the most beautiful girl, Isabel, but also in her father. From Paul I learned that something had been done which must be concealed; from the boy, that something had been done which would make it impossible for him to go into any kind of public life; from the wicked old man, Mr. Brundish, that he had himself "defended" the father of this interesting pair at a critical junction, when he himself had been a Q. C. All this put together did not inform one of much; yet it made me curious, not so much to know more as to see, in the flesh, the man who had caused this terrible cloud to hang over his children's lives, the man who had "done something."

Well, I was introduced to him; I saw him; he was a singularly handsome man, portly, dignified, well dressed, and possessed of a manner perfectly charming; not only at ease with himself, but able to set his guests at their ease. He was apparently about sixty years of age; his abundant hair was of a splendid creamy white; his features were sharp and clear; his eyes singularly bright—they were of a deep blue, like those of his daughter; he not only looked, but he was, a perfectly polished and delightful man. At the very sight of him

all the injurious suspicion and doubts one had entertained of him vanished; as he talked, one was lifted out of one's self and carried into circles and among people one had never thought to know. Perhaps he talked too continuously, but nobody else present could have talked half so well, and I, for one, was content to listen.

There were six or seven guests besides Paul and myself; it was an excellent dinner, admirably served, and with admirable wine. At first I gave myself up entirely to the enjoyment of the delightful talk and thought of nothing else. But a strange thing happened: in the very middle of the dinner I caught a sharp and curiously suggestive glance from Isabel. It seemed to ask me what I thought now of her father, and if I really knew that——

I felt myself blushing like her brother, and my mind suddenly went back to what I had heard. Of what nature was the "cloud"? Had the ex-Q. C. really defended our host? and if so, on what occasion? And all the other scandalous statements returned to my brain: why had the venerable clergyman opposite to me no longer a cure of souls? Why had the gallant major next to him left the army? Was it true that the Honorable Arthur Mompesson had been expelled his club for cheating at cards? And this middle-aged lady, whom I had taken in to dinner, could she really have poisoned her lover? And while I pondered these things our host's pleasant genial voice went flowing on, so that one felt the strangest incongruity between these absurd questions and the place, the talk, and the people.

Three weeks later the pair were quietly married, without any party, bridesmaids, or ceremony at all. What Paul said to Isabel's father I know not, but at the wedding the old man seemed strangely shaken and agitated, trembling at every footfall. He had become aged, one knew not why. The bride and bridegroom drove from the church to the nearest station. Mr. Reeve went home, and I went back to the inn. I found there the man Brundish, who had been drinking already, though it was not yet noon.

"I told the old man I would interrupt the ceremony," he said with a grin, "and make him marry the girl under her true name, but he begged me not. I am to dine with him to-night instead. Ha! now that the girl is gone, he says, he does not care who comes to his house. Wanted to keep his own children from their father's old friends, you see. There's gratitude! Why, who defended him? Who made such a speech that all England rang with it—eh?"

"Well," I said, "now that Mr. Reeve's daughter has married, you have done with her at any rate, and with me, too."

"I don't know, young man, I don't know," he replied. "I am, it is true, a forgiving person, which is lucky for the happy bridegroom. But then he once shook a cane over my shoulders. I don't know if I have done with them. And I wasn't good enough to be invited to the house. Respectable company you met there, wasn't it? The man drummed out his regiment; the man expelled from the clubs; the woman tried——"

"Go to the devil!" I said, and left him.

A month or two later I heard from Paul that his father-in-law had been found dead in his bed. It appeared that he had no money of his own, but was living on his late wife's fortune, which had been settled upon herself, and was held in trust. The share of it which now came to Isabel put the newly-married pair at once into a position of great material comfort, if not wealth. But Paul was already making way in his profession.

"I must be a judge by forty-five," he said to me, laughing; "otherwise I shall think that I have failed."

"And then, Paul?" asked Isabel.

"Then I must be made Lord Chancellor, and I shall pass great measures for the law of the land, and shall become immortal."

I never knew any couple so entirely happy as they were during the first twelve months of their marriage. They had very few friends, and these were all Paul's own friends; they lived on Campden Hill—remember

that it was long before Campden Hill was covered with houses—and they were just as selfishly and as completely happy as love could make them. Gradually the pensive and troubled look vanished from Isabel's eyes; the "cloud," the "thing," the secret, whatever it had been, was wholly put away and forgotten.

Isabel's brother came to town soon after his father's death, and called upon me.

"I have made up my mind," he said to me soon after his sister's marriage, "what I shall do. So long as I remain in this country, Isabel will always have somebody to remind her of the past. If I once go away, she will belong entirely to her husband. While I am here I shall always be in terror of the thing being found out. I shall go away, then, and travel. After a year or two I shall convey to Isabel the news that I am dead. Then she will have broken altogether with the past. I shall settle down somewhere, perhaps, some day. I am not sure where or when; and if I am quite sure that I can never be identified, I shall marry, perhaps. But never, never will I come back to England." So we shook hands and we parted. Six months afterward there came a note to Isabel in pencil from her brother, saying that he was dying of fever on the African coast, and that the letter would be sent on after his death.

Isabel wept over the letter, but she dried her tears soon, and I think it was better that the last link which reminded her of the shame of her childhood should have been broken.

As for their happiness, however, it was rudely shaken.

One day Paul, the junior counsel in a case of no apparent importance, found himself unexpectedly called upon to maintain a legal position against the opinion of the court; he displayed in his argument so much ability and knowledge of the law as to call forth an expression of admiration from the judge himself. I was myself present in my quality of briefless barrister. On the termination of the case we came out, and stood for a few minutes talking over the point which had been

raised. Paul's senior joined us and congratulated him, prophesying that his table would never be without briefs after that morning's work. Others came to shake hands with him, and there was quite a little scene of congratulation and triumph. In the midst of our talk I saw, bearing straight down upon us, with the evident intention of speaking, no other than that terrible ex-Q. C. He was clearly half-drunk. One of the men among us whispered in disgust, "Good heavens! here's that miserable man Brundish!" Everybody stood aside to make way for him, as one makes way for a leper. Worse than a leper, in the courts of Lincoln's Inn, is a man who has been disbarred. As well should a man who has been stripped of his commission and drummed out of his regiment for cowardice show himself again upon parade.

This man, then, with a half-drunken laugh, walked straight to Paul and held out his hand.

"How are you, Paul, my boy?" he cried, addressing him independently by his Christian name; "Isabel quite well?"

Paul turned perfectly white. "How dare you," he cried, "how dare you speak to me? How dare you address me by my Christian name?"

"How dare I? Ho! ho! Not use his Christian name to the man who married my dear old friend's only daughter? How do you do, Sir John?" He addressed one of the group, a well-known counsel of very high standing and ex-Solicitor-General, who made no reply. "Gentlemen, you know me, all of you. I have been in court to-day, and I declare I never heard a better argument than my young friend's here. Why, I never put a point better myself."

"Your friend! Yours!" cried Paul with a gesture of loathing.

"Come, come!" cried the man. "This is rather too much. Why, Paul, you forget that you married the only daughter of my old friend Sir Robert Reeve Byrne, baronet, whom I defended. You remember my famous defence, gentlemen. I am sure it nearly pulled him

through, but not quite, for he got his five years' penal servitude."

Then there was a dead silence, and nobody dared to look at his neighbor. As for me, I understood it all. The case of Sir Robert Byrne was a *cause célèbre*. He had been, I remembered, defended by Mr. Brundish, Q. C., with marvellous skill and ingenuity. My delightful host was, then, no other than that famous baronet, then! and the rest of his guests—were they also what the ex-Q. C. had described them?

Paul recovered himself. "It is quite true," he said proudly; "I married the daughter of Sir Robert Byrne, but this man I know nothing of, except that he is a rogue."

Mr. Brundish looked round him; he saw on every face loathing clearly written. Half-drunk though he was, he was cowed. He said no more, but slunk away.

It was Sir John himself who laid his hand upon Paul's shoulder: and said kindly: "We are all sorry you should have been troubled by this scoundrel, whom I once called my friend. As for your private affairs—but of them we need not speak."

They all murmured something, the group broke up, and I took Paul by the arm and walked with him to his chambers. He threw his papers upon the table, and sank into a chair.

"It is all over," he groaned; "my career is finished."

"Paul, this is absurd."

"No," he said. "I have already made up my mind what will happen. These men are my private friends—they are part of our social circle; for Isabel, poor child, had no friends of her own. They are good fellows, and at first they will say that it doesn't make any difference, and think it too. But then, you see, there are the women. They will resent the thing, and show their resentment too. Isabel must be spared this, at any cost. Go away now, my dear fellow, and leave me to think."

"For heaven's sake, Paul," I said, "do nothing rash. Think of your profession first."

"No," he replied. "Isabel must be first thought of."

I lingered awhile, unwilling to leave him.

"Now you know all," he said. "It is something like a cloud, isn't it?"

"Is it possible that the courtly and polished——?"

"Quite possible. Sometimes I tried to think what he would look like in prison dress, but I never could. There was another side to him, though. I saw it on the day when I asked him for his daughter. 'Do you,' he said, 'know the story of my past?' I assured him that he need not open a painful chapter, because I knew everything. And then—then he broke down, burst into a fit of weeping like any woman, and thanked God solemnly that I had come to take his daughter away from him. 'For myself,' he said, 'I suppose I am sorry. That matters nothing. But for my children's sake, and especially for my daughter's sake, I am—sometimes I am mad.' I think that, when he was left alone after our marriage, he was really mad, and I am nearly sure that he killed himself. However, that is done with. Isabel must not know what has happened. And she must not be made to suspect that our friends, her new friends, know her secret. Women are not always considerate toward each other. I must think—I must think what is best to do."

Next morning, I was not surprised to receive a note from Isabel. She said that her husband was suddenly prostrated with some kind of a nervous breakdown, though he looked very well, and that the doctor ordered him to give up all work, break off all engagements, and go away for three months at least. They were going the same day.

The three months became six, and the six became twelve; they were travelling about in unfrequented places, where Paul's health would not suffer from noise and talk of travellers; they stayed only in towns where there were no English residents, and so on. Then Paul wrote to me that he had given up his chambers, and bought a cottage in the country, where he proposed

to stay, his health, he said, being too wretched to think of his practising any more.

I made many visits to the cottage. It was three or four miles from any village or house. It was on the seaside, and they had a boat. They had no children, and the only people who ever visited them were the family of the nearest clergyman, who came often to them. Isabel was their friend, unpaid governess, adviser, everything.

Remark, here, a very strange thing. This man, my friend Paul, to whom at the outset life without success would have seemed intolerable, who gave up the most promising prospects solely on his wife's account, who was endowed with every quality which success requires, was perfectly happy in this obscure retreat. He wanted no other kind of life; to sail in his boat, to wander on the sands, to meditate in his garden, always with Isabel beside him, was enough for him. His love for Isabel was absorbing and sufficient for both.

They lived in this way for five-and-twenty years. Then the greatest possible misfortune fell upon Paul. For Isabel caught a fever and died. Then Paul began to break up. He was only just past fifty, and should have been in the vigorous enjoyment of his manhood; but he began to fail. In the last months of his life I stayed a great deal with him, and he talked freely about his old ambitions and their sudden end.

"I am sure," he said, "that I did right in giving all up. Sooner or later Isabel would have found out—would have been made to feel, somehow—that other people knew the truth. In such a case the only safety lies in flight."

"But if you had stayed, your own career was certain."

"Perhaps; with the explanation, whenever my name was mentioned, 'You know, I suppose, that he married Sir Robert Byrne's daughter.' And she would have heard it."

"Tell me," I said, "who were the residents of the village—the people we met at dinner——"

"I do not know. Why do you ask?"

Evidently Isabel knew nothing of them. Perhaps, after all, the wicked old man lied about them.

"I am glad to think," Paul went on, "that we never met any of them afterward, because perhaps they knew. Thank God! never, never for a moment, after the marriage did Isabel feel that her father's sins were visited upon her."

"Why, Paul," I said, "they were; but you shifted the burden to your own shoulders and bore it for her. Did Isabel ever learn why you left London?"

"No, she never knew and she never suspected. The man Brundish died a very little while after—of drink, I believe."

"And you never regretted all that you lost?"

"Never—not for a moment."

It used to be said that the advent of steam had done away with the poetry of travel. It would indeed seem as though a stiff, monotonous railroad-car were scarcely so favorable to romantic adventures as the more picturesque stage-coach; but the human heart triumphs over the most prosaic surroundings, and can weave the freshest of love-poems amid no matter how much of dust and cinders; as in this charming story by Jacques Normand. It has been translated for ROMANCE by Isabel Smithson.

ON THE EXPRESS TRAIN.

THERE was a great crowd at the railway-station when I left Paris to go to Marseilles, so I thought myself lucky to have only one other passenger in the compartment with me. He was a stern, official-looking personage, and as he had nothing with him but a portfolio, I knew that he would not travel far, and I should soon have the compartment all to myself.

But alas, I made too sure! Just as the train was going to start, I heard a discussion going on outside.

"No, no, I engaged a private compartment, and I must have it," said a silvery feminine voice.

"I cannot give it to you, madame, for there is not one on the train," replied the guard.

"But I wrote and ordered it!"

"Your letter was not received."

"Put on another carriage then."

"That is impossible; we are just going to start—be quick. There are two seats here."

"In there?"

"Yes, madame."

A small, dark head appeared for an instant in the doorway of the compartment, and was suddenly withdrawn. Then a startled voice exclaimed:

"There are two gentlemen in there!"

"Very well, madame, I cannot give you a whole carriage to yourself."

"Then I shall not go at all!"

"As you please. The train is just going."

"Wait, wait, I am obliged to go now. As there is absolutely no other place, I—but can I have a private compartment when I get to the next station?"

"Certainly, madame."

"You will telegraph for it?"

"Yes, madame!"

"You promise?"

"Yes."

The door opened again, and the same head appeared, surrounded by a sort of halo of parcels, wraps, etc.; a lady stepped into the compartment, a whistle blew, and we were off. The other gentleman politely rose and took the place next to me, so as to leave the whole side opposite us for the new-comer.

She did not vouchsafe a glance to either of us, however, for she was breathless and flushed with indignation, and she was no sooner seated than she began to arrange her satchels and parcels with all the haste usually displayed by people who have a long journey before them. She had a satchel, another satchel, and still another, and a bundle of railway-rugs.

I watched her proceedings out of the corner of my eye, and a single glance at her face told me that she was young and extremely pretty. The discovery pleased me not a little; it is much more agreeable to travel sitting opposite a pretty woman than an ugly one!

It was very cold, and the fair traveller wrapped a rug round her and gazed out obstinately at the wintry landscape; the other passenger took some official-looking documents out of his portfolio and examined them, while I pretended to be absorbed in my newspapers.

At half-past eleven we reached Laroche, and as soon as the train stopped, the gentleman gathered up his papers, rose, bowed, and left us. The lady went to the door and asked the station-master in an anxious tone: "Have you been telegraphed from Paris for a private compartment?"

"Yes, madame, and I have already sent the order on."

"On! What do you mean? I want it now."

"Impossible, madame. We have no carriages here, but you can get one at Lyons."

"What time will that be?"

"Five forty-five."

"The whole day! I cannot stay in this carriage until then—I cannot, and I will not."

"Be careful, madame, the train is starting!"

And the train started. She went back to her seat indignant, and without looking at me. I began reading my paper again, but I could not fix my thoughts upon the news. I read the same line over twenty times without knowing what it contained; I have no doubt that I held the paper upside down most of the time. My fellow-traveller was distractingly pretty, and I longed to enter into conversation with her, but I did not know how to manage the matter. She was a lady, I knew, and I racked my brain for some appropriate and original remark with which to break the ice. It was all in vain. Nothing occurred to me except the weather, and that I scorned.

I was still wondering, when the train came to a sudden halt, and a guard called out:

"Tonnerre! Twenty-five minutes for lunch!"

My *vis-à-vis* rose, put off her rugs, laid them on the seat, and got off the train. It was noon and she was probably famished. She went to the buffet at the left side of the station, and I followed her.

I had leisure to admire her graceful figure, which was clad in a long cloak trimmed with otter; I observed also that she wore a gray felt hat on her very black hair, and that she had very small feet.

I rushed into the restaurant with the rest of the passengers, a dishevelled, dusty, excited throng, and began eating whatever was put before me. My fellow-traveller was seated at a separate table, drinking bouillon. As soon as I had finished, I strolled about, and smoked a cigarette. The alloted twenty-five minutes were slipping by, and the passengers began to return to the train. I went to my place, and found that the lady had not yet come back, and on looking out of the window I

saw her standing at a bookseller's stall. Her back was toward me, but I recognized the otter cloak, the gray felt hat, and the graceful figure.

All the other passengers were in their seats; the time was up, the guards shut the doors noisily, yet she did not move. She would be left behind! "Madame, madame!" I cried; but the distance was too great, she could not hear me. There was hardly a minute left.

What was I to do? Suddenly a bright idea came to me. I could not bear to think of her being left without her wraps in that bitter cold; poor little woman! She should at least have her belongings with her. I seized her three satchels and her rugs in my arms and threw them out of the window, calling to a guard who stood near:

"Give these to that lady—over there."

He picked them up and turned away, the train began to move, and at the same instant there entered at the opposite side of the train, breathless and hurried, my fellow-traveller!

Horror! I had made a mistake. The lady at the book-stall was not the owner of the luggage. Yet her figure, her cloak, her hat were the same—an absurd resemblance. What was to be done now? A pretty mess I had made of it! While I stood speechless, she reached her seat and immediately exclaimed:

"Where are my satchels? Some one has taken all my things!"

Then for the first time she looked at me, and with what an expression of doubt and scorn! I shall never forget it.

"Pardon me," I stammered, "your property has not been stolen. It has been left at Tonnerre."

"Why, what for?" she gasped, and then, as best I could, I explained. She gave me another look; it was worse than the first one—I cannot describe it.

"I am profoundly grieved," I added, "but truly my intention was good. I did not want you to catch cold. Besides, your things are safe, and I shall telegraph—*you* will telegraph—*we* will telegraph—from the next

station. I give you my word you shall have your things, if I have to go back and fetch them myself."

"Enough, sir," she answered coldly. "I know what to do," and she sat down and looked out of the window. But alas, the poor little thing had now no warm rugs, and before very long she began to shiver. In vain she buttoned her cloak and turned up the collar, her little teeth fairly chattered.

"Madame," I cried, "I beg of you, on my knees, to take my rug. You will catch cold, it will be my fault, and I shall never forgive myself."

"I do not wish to speak to you, sir," she said coldly.

I grew excited. I had made such a ridiculous blunder, and she was such a lovely woman! Suddenly I took a desperate resolve.

"If you do not take this, I shall throw myself off the train," I said, and laying my railway-rug beside her, I raised the car-window, put out my hand and opened the door from the outside.

Was I in earnest? Between you and me, reader, I do not think I was. But I looked it, evidently, for my hearer exclaimed in a voice of alarm: "You are crazy!"

"Take the rug, or I jump!" I said.

She took it, put it round her, and remarked in a softened tone, as I closed the door and window:

"You will die of cold!"

"It would be but a fit punishment for my unpardonable stupidity," I answered.

"You were not stupid, but hasty," she said, "and, as you told me, your intention was good; but how could you mistake that lady for me?"

"She was so charming," I explained, and my listener smiled. The ice was broken—that is, as far as the conversation went; literally, I was nearly frozen. However, I soon forgot the cold, for my companion was delightful, piquant, fascinating. She talked well, though with charming simplicity. She enjoyed travelling; just like me. She had been in Italy; so had I. Also in Spain; so had I. She longed for Egypt; exactly what I did. In literature, in music,—in fact, in everything,

—it was the same. We had precisely the same tastes. What was more, we soon discovered that we had several mutual acquaintances; we had probably attended the same receptions more than once. And I had never observed her; great heavens! where were my eyes?

After a time, although I was supremely happy, I became conscious of the penetrating cold. I did my best to conceal that fact, but when we reached Dijon, at half-past two o'clock, my right foot was numb. Here we telegraphed to Tonnerre for the satchels and rugs.

At Macon my left foot was numb. Here we learned that the luggage would be sent to Marseilles the next day.

At Lyon-Perrache it was my left hand's turn to be stiff; I observed also that my fair companion forgot to claim her private compartment.

At Valence my right hand followed suit, but I learned that she was a widow, without children.

At Avignon my nose was blue, yet I divined that she had not cared much for her first husband.

Marseilles, alas! I sneezed violently, and with a gracious smile she handed me my rug and whispered, "Au revoir." Then we parted, and I went to the hotel and dreamed all night of her last words, and woke next day with the worst cold in my head I had ever known. I hardly dared to show myself to my friends who had asked me to dinner, but at last I decided to go, and what was my ecstasy to find among the guests my charmer of the express-train! A hardly perceptible smile played round her lips when I was presented to her, and in a whisper I asked: "Tonnerre?"

"I have received them," she said, in the same tone.

As we sat down to dinner the host said to me: "You have a terrible cold. Did you catch it on the train?"

"Probably," I said, "but I do not regret it."

He did not understand this strange remark, but I caught the swift, tender glance which my fellow-traveller shot toward me across a steaming platter of boiled fish.

Two weeks from to-day will be my wedding-day.

This good-humored and philosophical little sketch by Captain Marryatt is especially pertinent in a country where fortunes are made and lost so easily and quickly as in America. And its excellent moral may readily be applied also in other ways than the materialistic.

THE WAY TO BE HAPPY.

Cut your coat according to your cloth, is an old maxim and a wise one; and if people would only square their ideas according to their circumstances, how much happier might we all be! If we only would come down a peg or two in our notions, in accordance with our waning fortunes, happiness would be always within our reach. It is not what we have, or what we have not, which adds or subtracts from our felicity. It is the longing for more than we have, the envying of those who possess that more, and the wish to appear in the world of more consequence than we really are, which destroy our peace of mind, and eventually lead to ruin.

I never witnessed a man submitting to circumstances with good humour and good sense so remarkably as my friend Alexander Willemott. When I first met him, since our school days, it was at the close of the war: he had been a large contractor with Government for army clothing and accoutrements, and was said to have realized an immense fortune, although his accounts were not yet settled. Indeed, it was said that they were so vast that it would employ the time of six clerks, for two years, to examine them, previous to the balance-sheet being struck. As I observed, he had been at school with me, and, on my return from the East Indies, I called upon him, to renew our old acquaintance, and congratulate him upon his success.

"My dear Reynolds, I am delighted to see you. You must come down to Belem Castle; Mrs. Willemott will receive you with pleasure, I'm sure. You shall see my two girls."

I consented. The chaise stopped at a splendid mansion, and I was ushered in by a crowd of liveried servants. Everything was on the most sumptuous and magnificent scale. Having paid my respects to the lady of the house, I retired to dress, as dinner was nearly ready, it being then half-past seven o'clock. It was eight before we sat down. To an observation that I made, expressing a hope that I had not occasioned the dinner being put off, Willemott replied, "On the contrary, my dear Reynolds, we never sit down until about this hour. How people can dine at four or five o'clock, I cannot conceive. I could not touch a mouthful."

The dinner was excellent, and I paid the encomiums which were its due.

"Do not be afraid, my dear fellow—my cook is an *artiste extraordinaire*—a regular *Cordon Bleu*. You may eat any thing without fear of indigestion. How people can live upon the English cookery of the present day, I cannot conceive. I seldom dine out, for fear of being poisoned. Depend upon it, a good cook lengthens your days, and no price is too great to insure one."

When the ladies retired, being alone, we entered into friendly conversation. I expressed my admiration of his daughters, who certainly were very handsome and elegant girls.

"Very true; they are more than passable," replied he. "We have had many offers, but not such as come up to my expectations. Baronets are cheap now-a-days, and Irish lords are nothings; I hope to settle them comfortably. We shall see. Try this claret; you will find it excellent, not a headache in a hogshead of it. How people can drink port I cannot imagine."

The next morning he proposed that I should rattle round the park with him. I acceded, and we set off in a handsome open carriage, with four grays, ridden by postilions at a rapid pace. As we were whirling along, he observed, "In town we must of course drive only a pair, but in the country I never go out without four horses. There is a spring in four horses which is delightful; it makes your spirits elastic, and you feel

that the poor animals are not at hard labour. Rather than not drive four, I would prefer to stay at home."

Our ride was very pleasant, and in such amusements passed away one of the most pleasant weeks that I ever remembered. Willemott was not the least altered—he was as friendly, as sincere, as open-hearted, as when a boy at school. I left him, pleased with his prosperity, and acknowledging that he was well deserving of it, although his ideas had assumed such a scale of magnificence.

I went to India when my leave expired, and was absent about four years. On my return, I inquired after my friend Willemott, and was told that his circumstances and expectations had been greatly altered. From many causes, such as a change in the Government, a demand for economy, and the wording of his contracts having been differently rendered from what Willemott had supposed their meaning to be, large items had been struck out of his balance-sheet, and, instead of being a millionaire, he was now a gentleman with a handsome property. Belem Castle had been sold, and he now lived at Richmond, as hospitable as ever, and was considered a great addition to the neighbourhood. I took the earliest opportunity of going down to see him.

"Oh, my dear Reynolds, this is really kind of you to come without invitation. Your room is ready, and bed well aired, for it was slept in three nights ago. Come —Mrs. Willemott will be delighted to see you."

I found the girls still unmarried, but they were yet young. The whole family appeared as contented and happy, and as friendly, as before. We sat down to dinner at six o'clock; the footman and coachman attended. The dinner was good, but not by the *artiste extraordinaire*.

I praised everything. "Yes," replied he, "she is a very good cook; she unites the solidity of the English with the delicacy of the French fare; and, altogether, I think it a *decided improvement*. Jane is quite a treasure." After dinner, he observed, "Of course you know I have sold Belem Castle, and reduced my establish-

ment. Government has not treated me fairly, but I am at the mercy of Commissioners, and a body of men will do that which, as individuals, they would be ashamed of. The fact is, the odium is borne by no one in particular, and it is only the sense of shame which keeps us honest, I am afraid. However, here you see me, with a comfortable fortune, and always happy to see my friends, especially my old school-fellow. Will you take *port* or claret; the port is very fine, and so is the claret. By the by, do you know—I'll let you into a family secret; Louisa is to be married to a Colonel Willer—an *excellent* match! It has made us all happy."

The next day we drove out, not in an open carriage as before, but in a chariot and with a *pair of horses*.

"These are handsome horses," observed I.—"Yes," replied he, "I am fond of good horses; and, as I only keep a pair, I have the best. There is a certain degree of pretension in *four horses*, I do not much like—it appears as if you wished to overtop your neighbors."

I spent a few very pleasant days, and then quitted his hospitable roof. A severe cold, caught that winter, induced me to take the advice of the physicians, and proceed to the South of France, where I remained two years. On my return, I was informed that Willemott had speculated, and had been unlucky on the Stock Exchange; that he had left Richmond, and was now living at Clapham. The next day I met him near the Exchange.

"Reynolds, I am happy to see you. Thompson told me that you had come back. If not better engaged, come down to see me; I will drive you down at four o'clock, if that will suit."

It suited me very well, and, at four o'clock, I met him according to appointment at a livery stable over the Iron Bridge. His vehicle was ordered out; it was a phaeton drawn by two long-tailed ponies—altogether a very neat concern. We set off at a rapid pace.

"They step out well, don't they? We shall be down in plenty of time to put on a pair of shoes by five o'clock,

which is *our dinner-time*. Late dinners don't agree with me—they produce indigestion. Of course, you know that Lousia has a little boy."

I did not; but congratulated him.

"Yes, and has now gone out to India with her husband. Mary is also engaged to be married—a very *good* match—a Mr. Rivers, in the law. He has been called to the bar this year, and promises well. They will be a little pinched at first, but we must see what we can do for them."

We stopped at a neat row of houses, I forget the name, and, as we drove up, the servant, the only man-servant, came out, and took the ponies round to the stable, while the maid received my luggage, and one or two paper-bags, containing a few extras for the occasion. I was met with the same warmth as usual by Mrs. Willemott. The house was small, but very neat; the remnants of former grandeur appeared here and there, in one or two little articles, favorites of the lady. We sat down at five o'clock to a *plain* dinner, and were attended by the footman, who had rubbed down the ponies and pulled on his livery.

"A good plain cook is the best thing, after all," observed Willmott. "Yeour fine cooks won't condescend to roast and boil. Will you take some of this sirloin? The under-cut is excellent. My dear, give Mr. Reynolds some Yorkshire pudding."

When we were left alone after dinner Willemott told me, very unconcernedly, of his losses.

"It was my own fault," said he; "I wished to make up a little sum for the girls, and risking what they would have had, I left them almost penniless. However, we can always command a bottle of port and a beef-steak, and *what more* in this world can you have? Will you take port or white?—I have no claret to offer you."

We finished our port, but I could perceive no difference in Willemot. He was just as happy and as cheerful as ever. He drove me to town the next day. During our drive, he observed, "I like ponies,

they are so little trouble; and I prefer them to driving one horse in this vehicle, as I can put my wife and daughters into it. It's selfish to keep a carriage for yourself alone, and one horse in a four-wheeled double chaise appears like an imposition upon the poor animal."

I went to Scotland, and remained about a year. On my return, I found that my friend Willemott had again shifted his quarters. He was at Brighton; and having nothing better to do, I concluded to go there and see him. It was not until after some inquiry that I could find out his address. At last I obtained it, in a respectable but not fashionable part of this overgrown town. Willemott received me just as before.

"I have no spare bed to offer you, but you must breakfast and dine with us every day. Our house is small, but it's very comfortable, and Brighton is a very convenient place. You know Mary is married. A good place in the courts was for sale, and my wife and I agreed to puchase it for Rivers. It has reduced us a little, but they are very comfortable. I have retired from business altogether; in fact, as my daughters are both married, and we have enough to live upon, what can we wish for more? Brighton is very gay, and always healthy; and, as for carriage and horses, they are no use here—there are *flies* at every corner of the streets."

I accepted his invitation to dinner. A parlor-maid waited, but everything, although very plain, was clean and comfortable.

"I have still a bottle of wine for a friend, Reynolds," said Willemott, after dinner; "but, for my part, I prefer *whisky-toddy*—it agrees with me better. Here's to the health of my two girls, God bless them, and success to them in life!"

"My dear Willemott," said I, "I take the liberty of an old friend, but I am so astonished at your philosophy that I cannot help it. When I call to mind Belem Castle, your large establishment, your luxuries, your French cook, and your stud of cattle, I wonder at your

contented state of mind under such a change of circumstances."

"I almost wonder myself, my dear fellow," replied he. "I never could have believed, at that time, that I could live happily under such a change of circumstances; but the fact is, that, although I have been a contractor, I have a good conscience; then, my wife is an excellent woman, and provided she sees me and her daughters happy, thinks nothing about herself; and, further, I have made it a rule, as I have been going down hill, to find reasons why I should be thankful, and not discontented. Depend upon it, Reynolds, it is not a loss of fortune which will affect your happiness, as long as you have peace and love at home."

I took my leave of Willemott and his wife, with respect as well as regard; convinced that there was no pretended indifference to worldly advantages; that it was not that the grapes were sour, but that he had learned the whole art of happiness, by being contented with what he had, and by "cutting his coat according to his cloth."

It is fortunate that although, as the young girl says in the story, valentines have gone out of fashion, there is somebody to write of the old days, when a valentine meant something. It could scarcely be done more charmingly than by Mary E. Wilkins in the following story from the *Home-Maker*.

AN OLD VALENTINE.

"I SAY! ain't had no valentines, neither on ye? Ain't you had none, Car'line?"

"No, ma'am," said Caroline.

The two young girls stood before their grandmother. Caroline was the elder, and taller, and prettier. Both of them hung their brown heads and smiled bashfully. They lived in a western town, and had come on a visit to their grandmother; her feeble, imperious pipe, and her old black eyes full of unexpected gleams, impressed them. They stood there side by side, in their neat blue dresses, with nice white frills around their necks, and their brown hair in smooth braids, and answered their grandmother's questions with shy, sweet deference. The old woman, small and frail as a dried grass-blade, and waving like one, with her false black front awry, and her black lace cap slipping, so thin in her black dress that she seemed to be shrinking from sight behind its loose folds, sat there, in her calico-covered rocking-chair, with the air of a queen. Now her beauty and strength and youth were gone, she had acquired a certain watchful and childish dignity which she held before her like a shield.

She had asked her granddaughters how their mother was, and their father, if they went to school, and who were their teachers; then suddenly came the query as to the valentines. The day before had been St. Valentine's Day. When the young girls shook their heads bashfully in response, the old woman seemed suddenly to fill out her gown better. When Caroline, her pretty face crowning her slender height like a pink flower, said

"No, ma'am," to the repeated question, the old woman gave a thud on the floor with her cane.

"Ain't never heerd nothin' like it!" said she, "why ain't you had no valentines? You ain't very homely; you ain't so good lookin' as I was at your age, but you look well enough; Car'line does, anyway. Ain't there no fellers in Ashfield? Why ain't you had no valentines, eh?"

The girls looked at each other; they blushed and hesitated.

"Why ain't you?" repeated their grandmother.

Caroline looked at her sister.

"I guess they don't send valentines quite as much as they used to," she said, timidly.

"I guess they're a little out of fashion," chimed in her sister.

"Out of fashion! No, they ain't out of fashion, neither! They've allers sent valentines as long ago as I can remember. I guess I've hed valentines 'nough in my day to know a leetle somethin' about it. Never heerd of sech a thing where I was brought up as Valentine's Day agoin' by and a girl's not havin' some valentines if she was thought anythin' of. Hand me that psalm-book off the stand there."

It was the youngest sister who brought the flat black psalm-book to her grandmother. The old woman fumbled long over the book, she pulled out many papers, and unfolded them with her trembling fingers.

"I hope there ain't been nobody a-meddlin' with this book," said she. Finally she spread out a paper triumphantly, and the girls pressed close to see. "There, look at that, there's a valentine!" said their grandmother.

The young girls eyed the decorated sheet, with its white doves, and pair of lovers in a bower of roses. The margin was a little yellow with age, but it was in very good preservation.

"See the verse under the picter?" said the old woman. "I'll say it to ye if ye'll wait a minute. I used to know it by heart."

She ruminated; then she repeated the verse in a sing-song quaver:

> "I love thee, fairest maid, so well,
> I can keep Silence never,
> But always would thy praises swell.
> And yet, 'tis passing strange to tell,
> I'd Silence keep forever.
> The oak supports the tender vine,
> Come, love, and be my valentine."

"He writ it himself," said the old woman. "He made it up, he could make real pretty varses. His name was Amos Dawson; he was old Abner Dawson's son; his mother came from York State. Ye don't remember nothin' 'bout it, I s'pose. That valentine must be nigh seventy year old; why, I guess it's older'n that. Sakes alive, it must be nigher a hundred, for I wan't more'n thirteen, when she got it, and that was twenty year arter it was sent. 'Twas sent to Silence Temple, and that is what't means 'bout keepin' Silence. I don't see how he ever thought on't, fur my part. Amos Dawson was a pretty smart feller. He was old 'nough to be my father, and he's been dead a good many year, but I can remember jest as well how he looked as if 'twas yesterday. He was tall, and thin, and light-complected, and had a kind of sober look round his mouth. He kept the store, and I know when mother sent me there on an arrant, I used to try to get waited on by some of the others. I was kind of afeared of him, he was so dreadful solemn and precise, and he'd measure off a yard of caliker for an apron as though 'twas widder's weeds, and hand out a stick of candy as though 'twas a stalk of wormwood. I never see such a sober man, but I s'pose he'd had things go again' him, 'though I didn't know nothin' 'bout it then. He was real sharp at a bargain, sober as he was, and he got real forehanded, but it didn't seem as if 'twas much account to him. He didn't care a mite 'bout fixin' on himself up, used to go round lookin' like Hudy, and he didn't have a coat of paint put on his house for twenty year. He had a good barn too—it

was tore down three year ago—but he didn't take a mite of care on't. His folks was all dead, and I s'pose he didn't have nobody to put him up to it.

"I used to hear my mother talk a sight about the way Amos Dawson was lettin' things run to rack and ruin, but I never heerd Silence open her mouth about it. I used to be over there a good deal too. She was the handsomest cretur, Silence Temple was! She was gettin' considerable along in years, too, but, sakes alive! she was one of them folks that you never thought of bein' old or young. Seemed as if years didn't make no difference to her one way or t'other. She was as old as mother, but I'd 'nough sight ruther go over to see her than any of the little girls that was my age. Land sakes! how I used to pester mother to let me go over to Silence's with my knittin'-work in the arternoon! She'd be afeared Silence wouldn't want to have me round so much, but she never showed it, if she didn't. Silence would tell me to draw up the leetle rockin'-cheer to the fire, and there I'd set side of her and knit, and she'd generally ask me to stay to tea, and we allers had sweet cake, and sass. Silence lived real nice; her father was old Squire Temple, and he left her consider'ble property. She lived all alone in that big house; you know where 'tis, on the hill opposite the meetin'-house. I dunno who does live there now; your Aunt Jane will tell ye. She used to have an old woman, that had allers worked in the family, live with her, but she died a year or two arter her father did, and then she wouldn't have nobody else. She was a fust-rate housekeeper, I can tell ye! There ain't many like her now-a-days. I tell Jane sometimes, she'd orter seen how Silence Temple kept house, and I guess she'd do some things a leetle different. There wouldn't be a speck of dust in one of them big rooms, and they was full of the most elegant carved furniture too, that the squire had had brought him from over seas. It wan't no easy job to keep the dust out of them carved cheers, I can tell ye; but I dont b'lieve anybody could have found a speck there, if they'd hunted with a candle and spectacles.

"Silence had a chany closet full of chany that was her mother's, and I don't b'lieve anybody could ever have left a finger-print in one of them cups or plates, not even if they was settin' on the topmost shelf. Sometimes Silence she used to take down them cups and saucers, and wash 'em when I was in there, and then I'd pester her to let me wipe 'em. You never see such chany; might have had it set in the winders for glass, it was so thin. I wonder I wan't afeared of breakin' it, but there never was but one cup broke that I knowed of, and then I s'pose Silence broke it herself; she said she did.

"It was one arternoon, when we had the chany out in the kitchen a-washin' on't, and Silence she had just washed one of them blue chany cups and I was a-takin' it to wipe, when I looked out of the winder, and see Amos Dawson a-goin' by. The linin' of his coat was tore, and there was a great long streamer of yaller cloth a-blowin' out behind when he walked. I giggled right out, and sez I, 'Sakes alive! jest look at Mr. Dawson's coat!'

"And all of a sudden, down dropped that blue chany cup, and broke all to smash! I was so scart that I hollered right out, but Silence she just stooped down and begun pickin' up the pieces of chany.

"'I'm dreadful sorry,' sez I, for I s'posed I'd broke it, but Silence she just sez, sez she:

"'I broke it myself; don't mind nothin' about it, Cynthy Ann,' and she went on a-pickin' up the pieces.

"When she got up, she looked as if she had been cryin', and I thought it was because the cup was broke. I told her I was dreadful sorry 'bout it, but she stood up straight—I never see her stoop a mite; she was as straight as an Injun—and sez she:

"'It don't make no odds about the cup. I've got all the cups I want,' but her voice sounded jest as if she was as full of tears as she could hold, and I didn't know what to make on't.

"We finished washin' the chany, and then we sot down with our knittin'-work, and I staid to tea, and we

had plum cake, and hot biscuits, but Silence she was dreadful sober. She wan't no great talker anyhow, but she looked so bright at you, you didn't seem to realize that she wan't talkin'; I've seen her a sittin in a room-full, and not speakin' a word, and I don't believe but everybody thought she was dreadful sociable. She looked like a pictur anyhow, and there didn't seem to be no need of her talkin'.

"When I got home that night arter the chany cup was broke, I told mother how Amos Dawson had gone by with the rags hangin' from his coat, and she laughed, and sez she:

"'I dunno as you'd better say much about Amos Dawson to Silence, for I s'pose it's her fault that the rags are hangin'.'

"'Why?' sez I. I didn't know what she meant.

"'Silence gave Amos the mitten once,' sez mother; 'leastways they say she did, and he's been terrible cut up about it, and that's what makes him so slack about himself. I guess there wouldn't have been many rags a-hangin' if Silence had had him.'

"'Why wouldn't she have him?' sez I.

"'I guess she felt above him,' sez mother. 'She was Squire Temple's daughter, and he was jest a-tendin' in the store then. I guess she thought he wan't quite good enough for her,' sez mother, 'but she didn't get nobody any better. It don't do for girls to be too partickler.'

"Well, arter mother told me thet, I never see Amos Dawson, but I thought on't, and wanted to say somethin' about it to Silence, but I didn't darse to. Silence was one you couldn't take no liberties with, arter all; if you tried it, you'd find all of a sudden that you'd walked up again a stone wall, when you thought you was going to trample down posies. Mother used to say that there was somethin' of old Squire Temple in her. So I never dare say anythin' about Amos Dawson to Silence, but the time come when she said somethin' herself.

"One arternoon I was over to Silence's, and she had

to go up to the south chamber arter somethin', and I followed on. The south chamber was a great square room, and it used to be the Squire's; he slept there as long as he lived, and I s'pose he died there. He wan't sick long.

"Silence was a-huntin' in a chist for somethin', and I was lookin' round the room. I can remember jest as well how that room looked as if I was in it. There was a great high-posted bedstead, with curtains to it, and valances, and they were blue caliker with green and yaller roses on it. There were two chists of drawers, and a great cheer covered with caliker like the bed-curtains, and some flag-bottomed cheers, and the fire on the hearth was laid all ready to light, as if the old Squire was jest goin' to walk in. His camlet cloak and his bell hat was hangin' up on a hook, side of the chimbly.

"The minute I see that camlet cloak and that hat, I had a kind of a turn, for I could remember jest how the old Squire used to look a-walkin' out in 'em, though I wa'n't much more'n a baby when he died. I looked round at the other things in the room, but I allers kept a-comin' back to that cloak and hat, and I'd stand there on the hearth a-lookin' at 'em. I dunno what made me so crazy over 'em. Sometimes I've thought 'twas Providence. It made considerable difference in some folk's lives anyhow.

"I stood there a-starin' at that cloak and hat, and Silence she went on a-huntin' in the chist; she couldn't find what she wanted to, very easy, and I dunno whatever put it into my head, but I took a notion to peek into the pockets of that cloak. I dunno how I darse to; I knowed well enough I hadn't no business to be meddlin' with the old Squire's cloak, but I give one look at Silence to be sure she wa'n't lookin', and I put my hand into a pocket. There wa'n't nothin' in it, but I fumbled round till I found another, and then I pulled out somethin' that looked like a letter, and jest then Silence she turned round—

"'What's that you've got there, Cinthy Ann?' sez she,

and I was so scart and ashamed I couldn't say nothin'; I jest handed her the letter. She took it and opened it, and I peeked round her shoulder, and what do you s'pose 'twas? *It was this valentine!*

"I jest caught a glimpse of the picter, but I tell ye I didn't stop to read no varse then, for the fust thing I knew, Silence she jest dropped right down in a faint. I didn't have no idee what to do, for I'd never seen nobody in a faint afore. I thought fust I'd run and get mother, then I didn't darse to leave Silence, and I jest stood lookin' at her and shakin', I was so scart.

"Pretty soon she begun to come to a leetle, and she groaned, and I got down and took hold of her hand.

"'Ain't there somethin' I can do?' sez I. 'You ain't dead, er ye, Silence?'

"Silence she could jest grunt out somethin' about the camphire bottle on the table in the west chamber, and I tell ye, I run fer it, and I poured the camphire on her,—used up most a hull bottle. I could smell camphire every time I come into the house fer a week arterward.

"It wa'n't long before Silence come to, and she got up with me helpin' her, and crawled down-stairs; I wanted her to lay down on the sofy, but she wouldn't; she sot down in the rockin' cheer, and went to knittin'; white as a ghost she was, too, and when she tumbled down, she had hit her forehead on the bedpost, and it was swellin' up as big as a hen's egg. She'd put the valentine in her pocket; I see her slip it in, when she come to.

"Silence sot knittin', but she seemed dreadful sober, and I went home pretty soon. I wanted to make some tea for her, but she wouldn't let me, and she wouldn't let me get mother over, so I went home. I had a kind of an idee that she'd jest as soon I would. Before I went, when I was standin' with my shawl on, she looked up quiet, and sez she—

"'Mind you don't tell nobody I fainted away, Cynthy Ann; don't you tell your mother, ner nobody!'

"And I promised I wouldn't, and I didn't nuther. I went home, and I didn't tell mother a word on't.

"Next day mother sent me down to the store on an arrant, and on the way I jest slipped in to Silence's to see how she was. She was real white-livered, and there was a great black-and-blue place on her forehead, though the swellin' had gone down considerable. She acted sober too; she asked me if I was goin' down to the store, and then she looked so kind of wishful at me that I asked if she wanted me to get her anythin' at the store, but she said no, and I went along.

"Silence didn't seem like herself arter that for a long while; I'd go in there, an she'd act as if she was tryin' to be jest the same, but she couldn't. She begun to look real miser'ble too. She got thin as a rail, and she lost her color. Silence used to have real red cheeks. It allers seemed to me it had somethin' to do with that valentine, but I never said nothin' about it nor she nuther.

"I guess it was nigh six months arter I found that valentine, and she fainted away, that she looked kind of queer at me one day when I was in there, and sez she:

"'Cynthy Ann, I want you to come over here, and stay all night with me to-night, if your mother's willin'.'

"I was so tickled I didn't know what to do; I run home and asked mother, and she said I might stay if Silence wanted me to, and then I come back, and we had supper. Silence had it all ready. It was fall of the year, and it was dark early. Arter supper, Silence and I washed up the tea things, and then we sat down, front of the hearth-fire, and she knit, and I read some in a story-book she had. It was a leetle arter nine o'clock, when she looked up, and sez she—

"'Cynthy Ann, are you afraid to go out a leetle ways with me?'

"'No, ma'am,' sez I.

"She kept lookin' at me kind of doubtful as if she didn't know jest what to do.

"'I dunno but I'm doin' wrong,' sez she, kind of

pitiful, 'because I want you to go with me unbeknownst to your mother, and I don't want you to tell anybody, but there ain't nobody else I can call on, and it seems to me I can't go alone nohow. It's so different from anythin' I've ever done.'

"Silence she had on a black silk gown with satin dots on it, and she looked kind of prim, but real handsome. She had slim white hands, and she kept foldin' and unfoldin' 'em. She acted kind of narvous. I s'pose it did seem a good deal to her, what she was goin' to do, for she'd been brought up real nice and delicate, and she'd allers walked with one-size steps, so to speak.

"Well, we put our shawls on, and we went out; I didn't have no idee where we was goin' to. We kept on goin' and we passed the store; it was shut up, and we went up the hill till we come to Amos Dawson's house. There was a light in the settin'-room winder, and the curtains was up.

"Silence and me jest went up the path to the front door, and then we stopped. I thought she was goin' to knock, or open the door, but she didn't. She jest stood there, and I could hear her kind of pantin' for breath. It was ruther late for 'em, but the katy-dids was tunin' up in a patch of weeds opposite, and there we stood, with it jest as still as death, savin' Silence breathin', and them katy-dids.

"All of a sudden Silence she moved to one side, and got nearer the settin'-room winder, and I followed arter her. And what did we see but Amos Dawson, a-sittin' there, trying to mend his coat. His face looked terrible pale, and long, and sober, a-bendin' over the old coat, and he was a jerkin' his elbow way out when he sewed, and he hadn't no thimble and the room looked like Hudy.

"Silence she jest stood there, and looked a minute; then she give my arm a grip.

"'Come,' sez she, 'come home.' And she jest took a bee-line for home, and me arter her; I didn't know what to make on't.

"Arter that things went on jest the same. She looked wuss, and wuss, and folks begun to say she was in a decline. Sometimes I used to go home and cry arter I'd been there, Silence looked so bad. I guess it was a month or six weeks arter she and me went up to Amos Dawson's that I was goin' to stay all night with her again. She used to keep me quite often along there, and she sent me down to the store with the valentine. I never was so wonder-struck in my life, as I was when she took that valentine out of her pocket.

"Sez she: 'Cynthy Ann, do you want to do somethin' for me?' Her voice sounded dreadful sad, and she looked at me with her big, black eyes as if she was kind of afeard of me.

"'Yes, I do,' sez I. 'I do, Silence!' Lor' sakes! I'd done anything fur her.

"'Well,' sez she, 'I want you to carry this down to the store, and when Mr. Dawson ain't busy, and there ain't nobody near enough to hear what you say, I want you to hand it to him, and I want you to say this to him'—— Then she said it over kind of solemn and tremblin'—'Silence wanted me to give this to you, and say she'd jest got it, jest a little while ago. That she didn't ever know you'd sent it to her before.'

"She kind of stopped, and I waited.

"'What else?' sez I finally.

"'Nothin' else,' sez she, 'I guess that'll do. I never thought I'd do so much as that.'

"'What will he do when I've given it to him?' sez I, 'will he tell me somethin' to tell you?'

"She blushed up all over her white cheeks. 'Mebbe he'll send it back,' sez she.

"Well, I did jest as she told me to. I went down to the store, I was kind of afeard out alone in the dark too, and I hung around till Amos Dawson wa'n't waitin' on nobody, and then I went up to him and I handed him the valentine, and I said just what Silence had told me to.

"Sakes alive! you'd orter seen that man's face. His jaw kinder dropped, and he turned so white that I

thought for a minute he was goin' to die. But he never said a word, he just gave his head a kind of a stiff nod at me, and he clapped that valentine into his pocket. It was jest about as much as men know.

"Well, I waited round a little. I thought mebbe he'd say somethin', but he didn't, and finally I went back to Silence's, and told her about it. She didn't say nothin' neither, but she kinder started back as if she'd been struck. We went to bed pretty soon arterward, and I know she didn't sleep a wink. I didn't know what to make of the hull on't, but I never said a word to mother or nobody about it.

"I guess it was a week arter I went up to the store with the valentine, and Silence and me was settin' alone one evenin', when all of a sudden she spoke up, and sez she—

"'Cynthy Ann, how did Mr. Dawson act when you give him the valentine?'

"I'd told her afore, but I said it over again. 'He acted as if he was goin' to drop right down,' sez I.

"'Did he look pale?' sez she.

"'Look pale!' sez I, 'he allers looks pale, but I never see no live man look so pale as he did then.'

"'Then you think he felt sad?' sez she, dreadful wishful.

"'He looked as if he felt so bad he didn't know what to do,' sez I.

"Then all of a sudden, without no warnin', Silence she jest threw up her hands, and bust out cryin'. 'Oh,' sez she, 'poor Amos, I've got to go, I can't hold back no longer! I can't help if it ain't becomin' and seemly. I've got to go! I dunno as he cares anythin' about me, but I've got to go!'

"I was so scart, I didn't know what to do. I jest burst out cryin' too, and sez I—'I'll go with you, Silence, I'll go with you.'

"Silence she jest kept right on cryin' and talkin'. She acted as if all the gates was down, sure.

"'Oh, Cynthy Ann,' sez she, 'you don't know nothin' about it! Poor Amos, he used to go with me, a little,

and all of a sudden he stopped, and I never knew why, and that valentine was the reason. He sent it, and he thought I got it, and was too proud to say anythin' about it. He was terrible bashful and sensitive. Poor Amos! Oh, I've got to go, Cynthy Ann, I've got to!'

"'I'll go with you, Silence,' sez I.

"And afore I knew what had happened, we had on our shawls, and we was going up the road to Amos Dawson's. Silence she gripped my hand hard all the way. When we got there, Silence she went straight ahead to the door and knocked; she didn't hesitate none that time. We saw the light movin', and then Amos he come and opened the door. He looked somehow as if somethin' inside of him giv' a great start, but his face didn't move a muscle.

"'Good evenin',' sez he, and stood there with the lamp in his hand.

"He never asked us to come in, but Silence she kind o' made a motion to, and he led the way to the settin'-room. I never see such a lookin' place in all my born days. I never could see no reason for a man's livin' like the pigs, if he *was* down-hearted, but I b'lieve Silence she liked him better for't.

"When we got into the room, Amos he set the lamp on the mantel-shelf, and then we all stood there. Silence she had her head hung, as if she couldn't say her lesson, but all of a sudden she held it up, as if she was determined to, whether or no, and there wa'n't no whip in creation that could scare her, and sez she—'Amos, did you get that valentine?'

"'Yes!' sez he.

"'Well,' sez she, 'it was twenty year comin' to me. I dunno where 'twas all that time. Cynthy Ann found it in father's coat-pocket. I dunno whether he forgot it, or what. What I want to know is, Amos—if—'twas to do over, if—you'd *send it again?*'

"Amos he jest stood lookin' at her, then all of a sudden he went across the room to his desk, and he jerked it open, and he rummaged till he found that valentine, and he brought it over to her.

"'Here 'tis!' sez he, 'will you take it?'

"And Silence took it.

"I didn't know no better than to stand right there lookin' on, and there was Amos with his arm round Silence, and she was cryin', and he was kissin' her. I didn't see how she could have him, but I didn't know so much then as I did arterward, when I larned that there ain't no reg'lar weights and measures for things of that kind, and women, however sharp-sighted they air other ways, air mostly men-blind.

"'Why didn't you send back the valentine by Cynthy Ann?' sez Silence.

"'I didn't know that was what you meant,' sez Amos, and then he give her another kiss, and me a-starin'.

"'That silly varse!' sez Amos, 'I should have thought you'd have laughed at it now, Silence. I was young then. I thought you'd got it, but I met you the day arterward, and you didn't say nothin' about it, and the next time I saw you, you acted kind of stiff.'

"'That was because you hadn't been to see me,' sez Silence. 'I was pretty high-spirited in them days.'

"'I didn't come because you didn't say nothin' about the valentine, and I was afeard you didn't like it,' sez Amos. 'I was dreadful bashful and sensitive.'

"Then he kissed Silence again. I thought they'd never stop talkin', but finally Silence she said she must go, and Amos he went with us.

"Well, of course you know what came arter that. They was married right away, and Silence she hed the handsomest pearl-colored brocade I ever see in my life, and I stood up with her. I wore a worked muslin. Amos he went to live with her in the old Squire's house, and he fixed up his house and let it.

"And I never see such a change in mortal man as there was in Amos Dawson; it was most as big a change as if he'd been turned into an angel. I guess there wan't no more rags a-hangin' from his coat. He kinder acted as if all of a sudden he'd found there was a value in him he hedn't suspected, and it was goin' to pay to take care of himself. He allers looked jest as if he had

come out of the drawer, he kept his store like waxwork, and he held up his head and walked with a cane, and arter a while he was sent to the Legislater, and everybody called him Squire."

The old woman paused; her old face had the radiant enthusiasm of an improvisatore; her black eyes glittered; there were red spots upon her withered cheeks.

The two young girls, who had seated themselves upon a sofa near her, looked at her with serious, contemplative eyes.

"What became of them?" asked the younger sister.

"Why, they're dead, of course," replied the old woman; "what else could have become of 'em, I'd like to know? they were older'n me; I had some of Silence's things when she died, and I found this valentine in a shell-box she had, and I allers kept it."

"It's too bad they're dead," said the younger sister.

"Too bad they're dead! No, it ain't too bad neither! I guess it would be too bad if they was alive. They'd be over a hundred, and most like stun-blind, and deaf, and cripples. What do ye expect? This is a dyin' world! They was real happy and pleasant together, and then they died, when they'd lived to a good old age, within a year of each other, too, and now I s'pose they're singin' psalms together in the New Jerusalem. I don't see nothin' bad about that. I call it about as good an endin' up as there could be!"

In spite of the ethical spirit which infuses all of her writings, Miss Mitford, to do her justice, seldom introduces so pointed a moral as in the following story. Since the little tale is strictly true, however, and so very pretty; and since one can hardly take up a paper without reading of a will-contest, often justly instituted; even the most violent sticklers for the separation of fiction and ethics, as such, will not object to "The Residuary Legatee."

THE RESIDUARY LEGATEE.

A TRUE STORY.

Above half-a-century ago—for to such a date does my little story refer—Red Lion Square was accounted a genteel, if not fashionable, place of residence, and numbered among its inhabitants some of the principal London attorneys—solicitor was not the phrase in those days—to whom its vicinity to the inns of court rendered that neighborhood particularly convenient. Among the most respectable of these respectable persons was Mr. Mordaunt, a widower with five children, whose mingled strength and kindliness of character rendered him the very man to educate and bring up his motherless family; just as the union of acuteness and integrity, for which he was distinguished in his professional life, had placed him deservedly at the head of one of the most flourishing firms in the metropolis. He was not rich, for he had begun the world with nothing but industry and talent, had married a lady in the same predicament with himself, and had preferred giving his children the inalienable possession of an excellent education to the accumulation of money for their immediate portions; but, in the prime of life, with an excellent income and still brighter prospects, he lived as became a man of liberal habits and elegant tastes; and generous, both from temper and principle, refused no indulgence to his family, except such as appeared

to him inconsistent with their station, or with that wise and liberal economy which is as essential, perhaps even more so, to the affluent as to the poor.

The young people were all of high promise. The eldest, Frank, a youth of extraordinary ability, bringing up to the bar, was on the point of leaving Oxford, where he had distinguished himself greatly, and had recently been entered at the Temple. William, the second son, was in his father's office; and of the three daughters, Catharine, the elder, a girl of eighteen, was eminently pretty; Sarah, two years younger, and less handsome, had something of her brother Frank's talent; and little Barbara, the pet and plaything of the whole house, was that charming creature—a lively and good-humored spoilt child.

One evening, in the beginning of July, this amiable family were assembled in their pretty drawing-room. Mr. Mordaunt was writing a letter at one table; his eldest daughter working, or, to use her brother's phrase, flourishing an apron at another; the young men were lounging at the windows; and Bab (for the dignity of her aristocratic name, so often seen in the peerage, and so seldom elsewhere, was in this young lady's case sadly pretermitted—the very housemaid who dressed her called her Miss Bab) was playing with her doll on the floor.

Sarah's employment was different from the rest. She was standing at the harpsichord, busied in arranging, in China vases, a quantity of flowers with which it was strewed, and which had just arrived from a small country-house, which Mr. Mordaunt called his farm, on Enfield Chase.

"How I wish these flowers had arrived before poor Mrs. Sullivan went away!" exclaimed Sarah, after standing before them for some minutes to survey and admire her own handiwork. "She seemed so out of spirits, poor woman! and some of these beautiful roses would have comforted her and done her good."

"I fear, my dear Sarah," observed her father, looking up from his letter, "that poor Mrs. Sullivan's depres-

sion is too deeply seated to be touched by your pretty remedy."

"Mr. Darrell, then, continues implacable?" inquired Frank, with much interest.

"Yes," replied Mr. Mordaunt, "and I fear will remain so. I am writing to him now in his daughter's behalf, but I have no hope of any good result. He sent for my partner yesterday to make his will, evidently to avoid my importunity in favor of these poor Sullivans. Her elopement was a most foolish act—a wrong, as well as foolish, act; but ten years of penitence and suffering might have softened my old friend toward his only child, and one who, spoilt by his indulgence and her own position in society, a beauty and an heiress, can so ill support the penury and neglect under which she now languishes."

"Was she beautiful?" asked Catharine. "I see no remains of former loveliness."

"She is much changed," answered Frank; "but even I can remember her a most splendid woman. She had the presence and air of a queen, or rather of a young lady's notion of a queen. Fancy a stately and magnificent creature, with high features; a dark, clear, colorless complexion; a proud, curling lip; large black eyes, sometimes soft and languishing, but which could light up with a fire as bright as the glow of a furnace; a broad, smooth forehead; a dark, flexible brow; and a smile exquisitely sweet—and you will have some idea of Sophia Darrell before her imprudent and unfortunate marriage. Poverty and her father's displeasure have wrought this change, and perhaps her husband's death."

"Chiefly want of money," observed Mr. Mordaunt, sealing and directing his letter. "She had pretty well got over the loss of Captain Sullivan. Want of money is the pressing evil."

"I wish I were as rich as Mr. Darrell!" cried Sarah; and then she blushed and stopped, adding, in a hesitating voice, "What a pity it is that good wishes can do no real good!"

"Except to the wisher, Sarah," replied her father.

"Cherish kind wishes, my children; for a time may come when you may be enabled to put them in practice. In the meanwhile," added he, in a gayer tone, "tell me, if you were all very rich, what you would wish for yourselves, for your own gratification, ladies and gentlemen?"

"Oh, papa," exclaimed Sarah, "a great library!"

"And I," said Miss Bab, from the floor, "I'd have a great doll."

"I'd go to Italy," said Frank.

"I to Oxford," cried his brother.

"And I to Ranelagh," said Catharine, laughing. "In the meantime," added she, as the footman, it being now six o'clock, for they had dined at the then usual hour of three, brought in the tea-equipage, followed by the silver kettle and lamp, "in the mean time, we may as well go to tea, and afterward take a walk in Gray's Inn Garden as we meant to do, for the evening is beautiful, and my new hat is just come home."

About two months after, the same party, with the exception of Mr. Mordaunt, were assembled at nearly the same hour in a very different scene. They were then passing the long vacation at the farm, and, it being Bab's birthday, had adjourned to the root-house, a pretty rustic building at the end of the garden, to partake of fruit, and cakes, and a syllabub from the cow, which the enchanted little girl had been permitted to compound herself, under the direction and superintendence of the housekeeper.

Just as the young people were collected in the root-house, Mr. Mordaunt arrived. He was in deep mourning, and although receiving with kindness Sarah's offering of flowers, and Bab's bustling presentation of a glass of syllabub, which the little lady of the day insisted on filling herself, was evidently serious, preoccupied, almost agitated. He sat down without speaking, throwing his hat upon the table, and pushing away Catharine's guitar, which had been brought thither purposely to amuse him. He had even forgotten that it was poor Bab's birthday, until reminded of

it by the child herself, who clambered upon his knees, put her arms round his neck, and demanded clamorously that her dear papa should kiss her and wish her joy. He then kissed her tenderly, uttered a fervent benediction on her, and on all his children, and relapsed into his former silence and abstraction.

At length he said, "My sadness saddens you, my dear boys and girls, but I am just come from a very solemn scene, from Mr. Darrell's funeral."

"Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed Frank, with much emotion, "I did not even know that he was dead."

"Nor I, till I reached London yesterday," returned Mr. Mordaunt.

"Poor Mrs. Sullivan!" cried Sarah, "did her father forgive her before he died?"

"He sent her his forgiveness on his deathbed—an unspeakable comfort! but still his angry will remains unrevoked. She and her children are starving, while his immense fortune descends to one unconnected with him by blood or alliance, or any tie save that of an old friendship. After a few trifling bequests to friends and servants, I am left residuary legatee. The property is large, my children; larger, perhaps, than with your moderate views and limited expectations you can readily apprehend. You may be rich, even beyond the utmost grasp of your wishes, and Catharine may revel in innocent amusement, and Frank in travel; college with all its advantages is open to his brother; Sarah may have endless books, and Barbara countless dolls; luxury, splendor, gayety, and ambition, are before ye—the trappings of grandeur or the delights of wealthy ease; ye may be rich, my children, beyond the dreams of avarice—or ye may resign these riches to the natural heir, and return to peaceful competence and honorable exertion, reaping no other fruit from this unsought-for legacy than a spotless reputation and a clear conscience. Choose, and choose freely. My little Sarah has, I think, already chosen. When some weeks ago, she wished to be as rich as Mr. Darrell, I read her countenance ill, if the motive of that wish were not to

enrich Mrs. Sullivan. Choose, my dear children, and choose freely!"

"Oh, my dear father, we have chosen! Could you think that we should hesitate? I answer for my brothers and sisters, as for myself. How could *your* children waver between wealth and honor?" And Frank, as he said this, threw himself into his father's arms, the other young people clinging round them—even little Bab exclaiming, "Oh, dear papa, the money must *be all* for Mrs. Sullivan!"

The relator of this true anecdote had the gratification of hearing it from one of the actors in the scene—the Sarah of her little story, who is now in a green old age, the delight of her friends, and the admiration of her acquaintances. Her readers will probably be as glad to hear as she was, that the family, thus honorably self-deprived of enormous riches, has been eminently happy and prosperous in all its branches—that the firm distinguished by the virtues of its founder still continues one of the first in London—and that a grandson of Mr. Mordaunt's, no less remarkable for talent and integrity than his progenitor, is at the present time a partner in the house.

Dr. A. Conan Doyle is the author of the following strong and pathetic story, and he has written nothing more creditable to his nature as a man and an artist.

A SORDID AFFAIR.

"My dear, what a perfectly charming bodice! I mean the Louis quinze, with the vest of white chiffon de soie."

"Ah, but do look at that skirt of old rose silk, brocaded à la Pompadour, and trimmed with duchess lace!"

"But you know, Alice, my favorite of them all is that satin foulard, the gray one, gouffred at the neck. It is so lovely, I think, and exactly my measurements, for I went in and inquired."

"Then why not have it?"

"My dear! Fifteen guineas! It was dreadful. Now, if it had been ten, I might have managed it."

The speakers were two well-dressed ladies, standing in front of one of the largest plate-glass windows in Bond street, and gazing up at the dense group of slim, headless figures in prim, straight-cut, tailor-made costumes, or in evening dresses of the many strange neutral tints which were the rage of the moment. They had raised their voices in their excitement, and gave little clutches at each other's wrists as they compared notes about the treasures in front of them. Close behind them stood a plainly-clad, middle-aged woman, with a sad, wrinkled face, and the air of one who has found the world anything but a playground. She had stood gazing with a very critical eye at the various costumes, and listening with a half smile to the comments of the ladies beside her, but at the last remark she looked earnestly at the speaker, and put her hand out timidly toward her to attract her attention.

"If you please, ma'am," she said, "I could do that for you."

The lady looked round in surprise. "What could you do, my good woman?"

"A dress the exact same as that one at every point for ten pounds."

"You could do it?"

"Yes, ma'am. You'll excuse my speaking to you, but I could not help hearing what you said, and I know that I could give you satisfaction. I did all Madame Davouet's work when she was court dressmaker."

The lady looked inquiringly at her companion. "What do you say, Louise?"

"Well, my dear, if you wish such a dress. You need not pay unless you are satisfied with it."

"No, of course not. What is your name, please?"

"Mrs. Raby."

"Well then, Mrs. Raby, you quite understand that I shall require the dress to be absolutely as well finished as the one in the window, material and cut identical."

"Yes, madam."

"And it must be ready by next Monday before ten o'clock."

"Very well, madam."

"And your price is ten pounds, inclusive."

"Ten pounds, madam."

"I have your solemn promise that the dress shall be the same, and that I shall have it on Monday by ten?"

"I promise you, madam."

"Well, then, you may call this afternoon, and take your measurements. Mrs. Clive is the name, 73 Palace Gardens." She gave a nod, and turned again to her companion, while the dressmaker, with another very critical glance at the dress in the window, hurried off upon her way.

A busy morning lay before her, for her foulard was to be purchased at one shop, her linings at another, her braid and her buttons at yet another, all down in the depths of the city, far away from West-end prices. At last, with her arms full of brown paper parcels, she gained her 'bus, and drove out to Brompton, where, in a quiet side street of two-storied houses, a small brass

plate, "Mrs. Raby, costumier and dresssmaker," showed where she carried on her modest business.

In the front room an assistant was whirring away upon a hand sewing-machine, running a seam down the edge of a dress, while all around her lay heaped masses of cloth, gray strips of lining and rolls of braid.

"Whose is that, Anna?" asked Mrs. Raby.

"It is Mrs. Summerton's." The assistant was a broad-faced, good-humored girl, with red hair and freckles.

"Ah, you must be very careful with it. She is most particular. The front cut straight, and the back gored and cut on the cross."

"Yes, Mrs. Raby. It's coming out fine."

"I have a new job, a foulard dress, which must be ready by Monday. This is the stuff, and I shall have the measurements this evening. It will take us all our time. Is Mr. Raby in?"

"Yes, he came in half an hour ago."

"Where is he?"

"In the back room."

Mrs. Raby closed the door, and went into the next apartment. A small man, black-bearded and swarthy, was seated at a side-table, stooping over a box of colors and a small oval piece of ivory, upon which he was beginning to paint a background. He was a peaky, irritable-looking person, with sunken cheeks, a nervous manner, and a blue ribbon in his button-hole.

"It is no use, Helen," he said. "I can't paint until I have an order."

"But how ever are you to get an order if you don't show folk what you can do? Why don't you paint me, John, and hang me up in a case outside the door?"

"I want something that will look nice and attractive," said he, petulantly.

She laughed good-humoredly. "Paint me as you remember me when you first met me, then," said she.

"Ah, you were different then."

"Well, if I am, you ought to know, John, what it is that has changed me. It has not been an easy life for me this twenty years."

"Well, I'm sure I don't know what more I can do. I've taken the ribbon to please you."

"Yes, John, dear, you've dropped the drink, and God bless you for it."

"Six months since I had a taste."

"And aren't you the better for it, in health and happiness and everything? I always knew that, if you were to get away from those other clerks, you would be all right. Now you are a clerk no longer. You're an artist."

"Yes, but I earned money as a clerk, and I have made none as an artist. I don't see that I am the gainer by the change."

"Ah, I'd rather starve, dear, and have you a sober man. Besides, I can earn enough for both while you are gradually getting a few customers."

"Sitters!"

"Oh, yes, sitters. But you must go to them, or they will never come to you. Why look at me! I heard two ladies talking in the street, and by pushing myself in I got a ten-pound job."

"Did you, though?"

"Yes, this very morning. My stuff will cost from five to six, but there should be four pound profit." She took a key from her pocket, unlocked a drawer in a side-table, and, taking a tin box out, unlocked that also.

"We have fifteen pounds here," said she, turning out a small heap of gold. "We'll make it twenty soon, and then I can afford to hire another assistant."

Her husband looked wistfully at the gold. "It seems hard that you should put away all that money, and I should go about without a half-crown in my pocket," said he.

"I don't want your pocket to be empty, John, but you don't need more than sixpence. It is only putting yourself in the way of temptation."

"Well, anyway, I ought to be head in my own family. Why don't you give me the key, and let me have the keeping of the money?"

"No, no, John; it is my earning, and I'll have the

keeping. What you want I'll buy for you, but what I save I must have in my own hands."

"A pretty thing, too!" He went back to his painting with a snarl, while she very carefully locked up her small treasure again and then returned to the work-room. She had hardly turned her back when he sprang from his seat, rushed to the table and took two wicked little tugs at the drawer, but all was fast, so he slunk back, cursing under his breath, to his paints and his ivory.

That afternoon Mrs. Raby called at Palace Gardens, obtained her measurements, and forthwith set to work with might and main upon the dress. It was a Thursday, and she had only two-and-a-half working days before her, but she had given her promise, and she was a woman who would keep her word, if flesh and blood could do it. On Saturday morning it must be ready for the trying on, and on the Monday by ten o'clock it must be actually delivered. So away she went cutting, and stitching, gouffring, and tabbing, and looping, and hemming, working late, and working early, until on the second day a dozen separate pieces were all brought together like a child's puzzle, a square there, a triangle here, a long narrow slip down the front, and there, out of what to a masculine eye would have seemed the merest scraps, there rose the daintiest, neatest little dress that heart could wish, still loosely pinned together, but taking already its ultimate outlines. In this state it was carried to Palace Gardens, tried on, and then brought back to be finally completed. By twelve o'clock at night it was finished, and all Sunday it stood upon the frame in the work-room, looking so fresh and neat and perfect that the wife, in the pride of her heart, could not forbear from running in every hour or so, and coaxing her husband in with her, to look and to admire.

He had been a sorry helpmate to her. It was not work which had placed those marks of care upon her face. As a clerk in a wholesale cocoa firm, he had for years been having some three pounds a week, but of

the three it was seldom that one found its way to his wife, who planned and worked and managed as only a devoted woman can. At last she had herself turned to business, and had made herself independent of him, or rather had made him dependent upon her. A long course of secret drunkenness had ended in a raging attack of delirium tremens, which could not be concealed from his employers, and which brought about his instant dismissal from his situation. But it was no misfortune in the eyes of his wife. She had long made up her mind that his weak nature was not to be reformed while he was surrounded by temptation. Now, at last, she had him to herself. Some occupation must be found for him which would hold him within her influence. It was always with others that she laid the blame, never with him, for her eyes were blind to the shattered, irritable wreck, and could only see the dark-haired, bashful lad who had told her twenty years ago how he loved her. Could she keep out those evil influences, all would yet be well. Her woman's wit was set to do it. He had long had some leanings toward art, so now she bought him paints and paper and all that an artist could require. She had prayed and argued until he had taken the blue ribbon, and for six whole months she had stood between him and danger, shutting off what was evil, encouraging the little that was good. And now at last all seemed bright before her. Her husband had forsworn his fatal habits. She had saved a little money, and there was a prospect of saving more. Soon she might hope for a second assistant, and even spend a few pounds in advertisements. As she went into her work-room for the last time that Sunday night, holding out the lamp in her work-worn hand, and looked at the delicate tint and dainty curves, it seemed to her that the long struggle was at last drawing to an end.

She slept heavily that night, for she had worked almost continuously until the dress was finished. It was nearly eight o'clock when she woke. Her husband was not lying by her side. His clothes and boots were

gone. She smiled to think how completely she had overslept herself, and she dressed hurriedly, putting on her out-door things so that she might be ready to start immediately after breakfast to keep her appointment. As she descended the stairs, she noticed that the work-room door was open. She entered with a sudden strange sinking at the heart. The new dress had disappeared.

Mrs. Raby sat down on a packing-case, and sank her face in her hands. The blow was so sudden, so unexpected! But she was a practical woman, and there was no use in sitting groaning. She walked through the house. Her husband, as she expected, was nowhere to be seen. Then she wrote a short note to the assistant, left it on the work-room table, and, leaving the door upon the latch, set out upon her hopeless and piteous chase.

Just round the corner, in the Brompton road, was a pawnbroker's shop, and into it she hastened. A heavy red-bearded man, who was reading the morning paper in the corner, cocked his eye at her as she entered.

"What can I do for you, marm?"

"Would you kindly tell me, sir, if any one has been here this morning to pledge a gray dress?"

The pawnbroker called to his assistant, a young, pasty-faced man, who emerged from among the countless suits of clothes and piles of miscellaneous things which blocked the shop.

"There was some one here with a gray dress, Alec, was there not?" he asked.

"Yes, sir; that was the one that you thought might be a police matter."

"Ah, yes, of course. A small, dark man, with black hair?"

"That's it, sir."

"He was here at quarter-past seven, just after opening time. I wasn't down yet, but my assistant told me that the dress was a very good and new one, and that the man's manner was just a bit suspicious."

"You didn't take it, then?"

"No."

"You don't know where he went?"

"No idea."

The red-bearded man plunged back into his morning paper, and the woman hurried on upon her quest. Should she turn up the street or down? The sight of a distant glimmer of gilt balls decided her, and she found herself in another office. They had seen nothing there either of her husband or of the dress.

She paused irresolute outside the door. Then she reflected that, if her husband had come up the road, he would certainly have come there. He must, then, have turned down. She entered the first pawnbroker's in that direction, and there was the gray foulard dress hanging upon a hook right in front of her. She gave a cry of joy at the sight of it. It was not yet nine, and there was time to keep her appointment.

"That's my dress," she gasped.

The pawnbroker gazed at her curiously. "It was pawned this morning, marm, by a small, dark man."

"Yes, sir, that was my husband. How much did he get on it?"

"Three pound, five."

She had put some money into her pocket when she left home. Now she laid four sovereigns upon the counter.

"Please let me have it at once."

"Where's the ticket?"

"The ticket? I have none."

"Then you can't have the dress."

"But it is my dress, and here is the money. Why can I not have it?"

"I am very sorry for you, marm. But we must stick to the law. Suppose I take your money and give you your dress, and suppose then your husband comes here with the ticket and demands his pledge, what could I say to him? He could put his own price on it, and I should have to pay him."

"But I promise you he won't come. Do, do, let me have the dress. I've promised it to a customer at ten."

"I tell you that I can't, and there's an end of it," said the pawnbroker, turning upon his heel.

It was heartbreaking to be within touch of it, and not to be allowed to take it. And yet she could not blame the pawnbroker. She could see that he could not act otherwise. What remained then? To find her husband. But how could she tell in which of a hundred public-houses he was making amends for his long abstention. She paced wildly up and down the pavement. What would this lady think of her? She had given a promise, and a promise had always been a sacred thing with her. Was there no way in which she could manage? And then suddenly an idea came to her, and she ran as hard as she could back to her own house, rushed into the back room, opened her drawer, poured her little heap of savings into her purse, and hastened out to catch an eastward bound 'bus.

At Bond street she got out and sped on to the window where she had first undertaken this unhappy contract.

Thank God, the dress was still unsold in the window. She remembered that the lady had said that the measurements were correct. In five minutes more her whole savings had gone into the till of the wealthy retail firm, and she, with her great cardboard box, was driving at the top of her speed to Palace Gardens.

"My dear Alice," remarked her friend, who had dropped in early that morning, in order to criticise the costume, "you see it never does to trust people in that class of life. She said ten o'clock, and now it is five minutes past. They have no idea of the nature of a promise."

"No, I suppose not. Still, she is sure to come, for I have not paid her anything yet. Ah, here she is coming up the stairs, so she is not so very late after all."

The dress was duly unpacked, and Mrs. Alice Clive put it on at once, while her friend and the dressmaker walked slowly round her with sidelong heads, eyeing it up and down.

"Well, dear, how do you like it? It feels very comfortable and seems to sit well about the shoulders."

"Oh yes, I think it will do. I don't think, however, that the foulard is quite of the same quality as that which we saw in the shop."

"I assure you, madam, that it is."

"Well, Mrs. Raby, I am sure you will acknowledge that the lace is inferior."

"No, it is precisely the same."

The lady critic shrugged her shoulders. "At least, there is no question as to the inferiority of the cut," said she. "I cannot refuse to believe my own eyes."

"Well, at least, it is not dear at that price."

"It is entirely a matter of taste," the other rejoined, "but I confess that I would rather pay fifteen guineas for the other than ten for this."

"Well, well, on the whole I am pretty well satisfied," said Mrs. Clive, and paid over the ten pounds to the silent, weary woman who stood before her.

But strange and wondrous are the ways of woman, and where is the man who shall grasp them? As she walked home, tired, footsore, the loser in time and in money, with all her little hopes shattered to ruins, and all to be built up once more, she saw a crowd of jeering boys at the corner of the Brompton road, and, peeping over their shoulders, she caught a glimpse of a horrid crawling figure, a hatless head, and a dull, vacant, leering face. In an instant she had called a cab.

"It is my husband," said she, "he is ill. Help me get him into the cab, policeman. We live near by."

They thrust him into a four-wheeler, and she got in beside him, holding him up in her arms. His coat was covered with dust, and he mumbled and chuckled like an ape. As the cab drove on, she drew his head down upon her bosom, pushed back his straggling hair, and crooned over him like a mother over a baby.

"Did they make fun of him, then?" she cried. "Did they call him names? He'll come home with his little wifey, and he'll never be a naughty boy again."

Oh, blind, angelic, foolish love of woman! Why should men demand a miracle while you remain upon earth?

The extraordinary narrative which we print below could be written by no other than Wilkie Collins. It is much to have left behind him, with all his eccentricities and shortcomings as a writer, a reputation for conceiving the most ingenious and intricate plots of modern times. Here is one of the most characteristic of his brief productions.

YOUR MONEY OR YOUR LIFE.

We should all have enjoyed our visit to Sir John's country house but for Mr. Cosway.

And to make matters worse, it was not Mr. Cosway, but we, who were to blame. Our society repeated the old story of Adam and Eve, on a larger scale. The women were the first sinners, and the men were demoralized by the women.

Mr. Cosway's bitterest enemy could not have denied that he was a handsome, well-bred, unassuming man. No mystery of any sort attached to him. He had adopted the navy as a profession—had grown weary of it after a few years' service—and now lived on the moderate income left to him after the death of his parents. Out of this unpromising material the lively imaginations of the women built up a romance. The men only noticed that Mr. Cosway was rather silent and thoughtful; that he was not ready with his laugh; and that he had a fancy for taking long walks by himself. Harmless peculiarities, surely. And yet they excited the curiosity of the women as signs of a mystery in Mr. Cosway's past life, in which some beloved object unknown must have played a chief part. When I asked my wife to explain what had led to this extraordinary conclusion, she answered with satirical emphasis, "*You* don't look below the surface: *we* do."

As a matter of course, the influence of the sex was tried, under every indirect and delicate form of approach, to induce Mr. Cosway to open his heart and tell the tale of his sorrows. With the most perfect courtesy

on that "surface" of which my wife had spoken—and with the most immovable obstinacy under it—he baffled curiosity, and kept his supposed secret to himself. The most beautiful girl in the house was, to my certain knowledge, ready to offer herself and her fortune as consolations, if this impenetrable bachelor would only have taken her into his confidence. He smiled sadly, and changed the subject.

Defeated so far, the women accepted the next alternative. One of the guests staying in the house was Mr. Cosway's intimate friend—formerly his brother officer on board ship. This gentleman was now subjected to the delicately directed system of investigation which had failed with his friend.

With the most unruffled composure he referred the ladies, one after another, to Mr. Cosway. His name was Stone. The ladies decided that his nature was worthy of his name.

One morning the newspapers came in before we had risen from table. Our host handed one of them to my wife, who sat on his right hand.

She first looked, it is needless to say, at the list of births, deaths, and marriages; and then she turned to the general news—the fires, accidents, fashionable departures, and so on. In a few minutes she indignantly dropped the newspaper in her lap. "Here is another unfortunate man," she exclaimed, "sacrificed to the stupidity of women! If I had been in his place, I would have used my knowledge of swimming to save myself, and would have left the women to go to the bottom as they deserved!"

"A boat accident, I suppose?" said Sir John.

"Oh, yes—the old story. A gentleman takes two ladies out on the river. After a little while they get fidgety, and feel an idiotic impulse to change places. The boat upsets, as usual; the poor, dear man tries to save them, and is drowned along with them for his pains. Shameful! shameful!"

"Are the names mentioned?"

"Yes. They are all strangers to me; I speak on

principle." Asserting herself in those words, my wife handed the newspaper to Mr. Cosway, who happened to sit near her. "When you were in the navy," she continued, "I dare say your life was put in jeopardy by taking women in boats. Read it yourself, and let it be a warning to you for the future."

Mr. Cosway looked at the narrative of the accident, and revealed the romantic mystery of his life by a burst of devout exclamation, expressed in these words:

"Thank God, my wife is drowned!"

II.

To declare we were all struck speechless, by discovering in this way that Cosway was a married man, is to say very little. The general impression appeared to be that he was mad. His neighbors at the table all drew back from him, with the one exception of his friend. Mr. Stone looked at the newspaper, pressed Mr. Cosway's hand in silent sympathy, and addressed himself to Sir John.

"Permit me to make my friend's apologies," he said, "until he is composed enough to act for himself. The circumstances are so extraordinary that I venture to think they excuse him. Will you allow us to speak to you privately?"

Our host, with more apologies addressed to his visitors, opened the door which communicated with his study. Mr. Stone took Mr. Cosway's arm, and led him out of the room. He noticed no one, spoke to no one —he moved mechanically, like a man walking in his sleep.

For nearly two hours we were left to exercise our ingenuity in attempting to account for Mr. Cosway's wonderful outburst of gratitude at the drowning of his wife, and Mr. Stone's mysterious defense of him. At the end of the long interval, Sir John returned alone to the breakfast-room. Mr. Cosway and Mr. Stone had already taken their departure for London, with their host's entire approval.

"It is left to my discretion," Sir John proceeded, "to

repeat to you what I have heard in the study." A general outcry interrupted the speaker, "Oh, pray let us hear it!" Sir John smiled indulgently. "You shall hear it," he said, "on one condition—that you all consider yourselves bound in honor not to mention the true names and the real places when you tell the story to others."

I cannot honestly say that the art of unfolding the intricacies of a narrative was one of the accomplishments possessed by the master of the house. It is no act of presumption on my part if I here undertake to improve on our host's method of telling the story—using no other concealments than those which we all readily bound ourselves to observe. The events which preceded and followed Mr. Cosway's disastrous marriage resolve themselves, to my mind, into certain well-marked divisions. Following this arrangement, let me relate:

THE FIRST EPOCH IN MR. COSWAY'S LIFE.

The sailing of her Majesty's ship *Albicore* was deferred by the severe illness of the captain. A gentleman not possessed of political influence might, after the doctor's unpromising report of him, have been superseded by another commanding officer. In the present case the Lords of the Admiralty showed themselves to be models of patience and sympathy. They kept the vessel in port, waiting the captain's recovery.

Among the unimportant junior officers, not wanted on board under these circumstances, and favored accordingly by obtaining leave to wait for orders on shore, were two young men, aged respectively twenty-two and twenty-three years, and known by the names of Cosway and Stone. The scene which now introduces them opens at a famous seaport on the south coast of England, and discloses the two young gentlemen at dinner in a private room at their inn.

"I think that last bottle of champagne was corked," Cosway remarked. "Let's try another. You're nearest the bell, Stone. Ring."

Stone rang, under protest. He was the elder of the two by a year, and he set an example of discretion.

"I am afraid we are running up a terrible bill," he said. "We have been here more than three weeks——"

"And we have denied ourselves nothing," Cosway added. "We have lived like princes. Another bottle of champagne, waiter. We have our riding-horses, and our carriage, and the best box at the theatre, and such cigars as London itself could not produce. I call that making the most of life. Try the new bottle. Glorious drink, isn't it? Why doesn't my father have champagne at the family dinner-table?"

"Is your father a rich man, Cosway?"

"I should say not. He didn't give me anything like the money I expected when I said good-by—and I rather think he warned me solemnly, at parting, to take the greatest care of it. 'There's not a farthing more for you,' he said, 'till your ship returns from her South American station.' *Your* father is a clergyman, Stone."

"Well, and what of that?"

"And some clergymen are rich."

"My father is not one of them, Cosway."

"Then let us say no more about him. Help yourself, and pass the bottle."

Instead of adopting this suggestion, Stone rose with a grave face, and once more rang the bell. "Ask the landlady to step up," he said, when the waiter appeared.

"What do you want with the landlady?" Cosway inquired.

"I want the bill."

The landlady—otherwise, Mrs. Pounce—entered the room. She was short, and old, and fat, and painted, and a widow. Students of character, as revealed in the face, would have discovered malice and cunning in her bright little black eyes, and a bitter vindictive temper in the lines about her thin red lips. Incapable of such subtleties of analysis as these, the two young officers differed widely, nevertheless, in their opinions of Mrs. Pounce. Cosway's reckless sense of humor delighted in pretending to be in love with her. Stone

took a dislike to her from the first. When his friend asked for the reason, he made a strangely obscure answer. "Do you remember that morning in the wood when you killed the snake?" he said. "That's my reason." Cosway made no further inquiries.

"Well, my young heroes," cried Mrs. Pounce (always loud, always cheerful, and always familiar with her guests), "what do you want with me now?"

"Take a glass of champagne, my darling," said Cosway; "and come and give me a kiss. That's all I want with you."

The landlady passed this over without notice. Though she had spoken to both of them, her cunning little eyes rested on Stone from the moment when she appeared in the room. She knew by instinct the man who disliked her — and she waited deliberately for Stone to reply.

"We have been here some time," he said, "and we shall be obliged, ma'am, if you will let us have our bill."

Mrs. Pounce lifted her eyebrows with an expression of innocent surprise.

"Has the captain got well, and must you go on board to-night?" she asked.

"Nothing of the sort!" Cosway interposed. "We have no news of the captain, and we are going to the theatre to-night."

"But," persisted Stone, "we want, if you please, to have the bill."

"Certainly, sir," said Mrs. Pounce, with a sudden assumption of respect. "But we are very busy downstairs, and we hope you will not press us for it to-night?"

"Of course not!" cried Cosway.

Mrs. Pounce instantly left the room, without waiting for any further remark from Cosway's friend.

"I wish we had gone to some other house," said Stone. "You mark my words—that woman means to cheat us."

Cosway expressed his dissent from this opinion in the most amiable manner. He filled his friend's glass,

and begged him not to say ill-natured things of Mrs. Pounce.

But Stone's usually smooth temper seemed to be ruffled; he insisted on his own view. "She's impudent and inquisitive, if she is not downright dishonest," he said. "What right had she to ask you where we lived when we were at home; and what our Christian names were; and which of us was oldest, you or I? Oh, yes, it's all very well to say she only showed a flattering interest in us! I suppose she showed a flattering interest in my affairs when I woke a little earlier than usual, and caught her in my bedroom with my pocket-book in her hand. Do you believe she was going to lock it up for safety's sake? She knows how much money we have got as well as we know it ourselves. Every halfpenny we have will be in her pocket to-morrow. And a good thing too—we shall be obliged to leave the house."

Even this cogent reasoning failed in provoking Cosway to reply. He took Stone's hat, and handed it with the utmost politeness to his foreboding friend. "There's only one remedy for such a state of mind as yours," he said. "Come to the theatre."

At ten o'clock the next morning Cosway found himself alone at the breakfast table. He was informed that Mr. Stone had gone out for a little walk, and would be back directly. Seating himself at the table, he perceived an envelope on his plate, which evidently enclosed the bill. He took up the envelope, considered a little, and put it back again unopened. At the same moment Stone burst into he room in a high state of excitement.

"News that will astonish you!" he cried. "The captain arrived yesterday evening. His doctors say that the sea voyage will complete his recovery. The ship sails to-day—and we are ordered to report ourselves on board in an hour's time. Where's the bill?"

Cosway pointed to it. Stone took it out of the envelope. It covered two sides of a prodigiously long sheet of paper. The sum total was brightly decorated with lines in red ink. Stone looked at the total, and

passed it in silence to Cosway. For once, even Cosway was prostrated. In dreadful stillness, the two young men produced their pocketbooks, added up their joint stores of money, and compared the result with the bill. Their united resources amounted to a little more than one-third of their debt to the landlady of the inn.

The only alternative that presented itself was to send for Mrs. Pounce, to state the circumstances plainly, and to propose a compromise on the grand commercial basis of credit.

Mrs. Pounce presented herself, superbly dressed in walking costume. Was she going out? or had she just returned to the inn? Not a word escaped her; she waited gravely to hear what the gentlemen wanted. Cosway, presuming on his position as favorite, produced the contents of the two pocketbooks, and revealed the melancholy truth.

"There is all the money we have," he concluded. "We hope you will not object to receive the balance in a bill at three months."

Mrs. Pounce answered with a stern composure of voice and manner entirely new in the experience of Cosway and Stone.

"I have paid ready money, gentlemen, for the hire of your horses and carriages," she said; "here are the receipts from the livery-stables to vouch for me; I never accept bills unless I am quite sure beforehand that they will be honored. I defy you to find an overcharge in the account now rendered; and I expect you to pay it before you leave my house."

Stone looked at his watch. "In three-quarters of an hour," he said, "we must be on board."

Mrs. Pounce entirely agreed with him.

"And if you are not on board," she remarked, "you will be tried by court-martial, and dismissed the service, with your characters ruined for life."

"My dear creature, we haven't time to send home, and we know nobody in the town," pleaded Cosway. "For God's sake, take our watches and jewelry, and our luggage, and let us go."

"I am not a pawnbroker," said the inflexible landlady. "You must either pay your lawful debt to me in honest money, or——"

She paused and looked at Cosway. Her fat face brightened—she smiled graciously for the first time.

Cosway stared at her in unconcealed perplexity. He helplessly repeated her last words. "We must either pay the bill," he said," or—what?"

"Or," answered Mrs. Pounce, "one of you must marry me."

Was she joking? Was she intoxicated? Was she out of her senses? Neither of the three; she was in perfect possession of herself; her explanation was a model of lucid and convincing arrangement of facts.

"My position here has its drawbacks," she began. "I am a lone widow; I am known to have an excellent business, and to have saved money. The result is that I am pestered to death by a set of needy vagabonds who want to marry me. In this position, I am exposed to slanders and insults. Even if I didn't know that the men were after my money, there is not one of them whom I would venture to marry. He might turn out a tyrant, and beat me; or a drunkard, and disgrace me; or a betting man, and ruin me. What I want, you see, for my own peace and protection, is to be able to declare myself married, and to produce the proof in the shape of a certificate. A born gentleman, with a character to lose, and so much younger in years than myself that he wouldn't think of living with me—there is the sort of husband who suits my book! I'm a reasonable woman, gentlemen. I would undertake to part with my husband at the church door—never to attempt to see him or write to him afterward—and only to show my certificate when necessary, without giving any explanations. Your secret would be quite safe in my keeping. I don't care a straw for either of you, so long as you answer my purpose. What do you say to paying my bill (one or the other of you) in this way? I am ready dressed for the altar; and the clergyman has notice at the church. My preference is for Mr. Cos-

way," proceeded this terrible woman with the cruellest irony, "because he has been so particular in his attentions toward me. The license (which I provided on the chance a fortnight since) is made out in his name—such is my weakness for Mr. Cosway. But that don't matter if Mr. Stone would like to take his place. He can hail by his friend's name. Oh, yes, he can! I have consulted my lawyer. So long as the bride and bridegroom agree to it, they may be married in any name they like, and it stands good. Look at your watch again, Mr. Stone. The church is in the next street. By my calculation, you have just got five minutes to decide. I'm a punctual woman, my little dears; and I will be back to the moment."

She opened the door, paused, and returned to the room.

"I ought to have mentioned," she resumed, "that I shall make you a present of the bill, receipted, on the conclusion of the ceremony. You will be taken to the ship in my own boat, with all your money in your pockets, and a hamper of good things for the mess. After that, I wash my hands of you. You may go to the devil your own way."

With this parting benediction she left them.

Caught in the landlady's trap, the two victims looked at each other in expressive silence. Without time enough to take legal advice; without friends on shore; without any claim on officers of their own standing in the ship, the prospect before them was literally limited to marriage or ruin. Stone made a proposal worthy of a hero. "One of us must marry her," he said; "I'm ready to toss up for it."

Cosway matched him in generosity. "No," he answered. "It was I who brought you here; and I who led you into these infernal expenses. I ought to pay the penalty—and I will."

Before Stone could remonstrate, the five minutes expired. Punctual Mrs. Pounce appeared again in the doorway. "Well," she inquired, "which is it to be—Cosway, or Stone?"

Cosway advanced, as reckless as ever, and offered his

arm. "Now then, my dear," he said, "come and be married!"

In five-and-twenty minutes more Mrs. Pounce had become Mrs. Cosway; and the two officers were on their way to the ship.

THE SECOND EPOCH IN MR. COSWAY'S LIFE.

Four years elapsed before the *Albicore* returned to the port from which she had sailed.

In that interval the death of Cosway's parents had taken place. The lawyer who managed his affairs during his absence from England wrote to inform him that his inheritance from his late father's estate was eight hundred a year. His mother possessed only a life interest in her fortune; she had left her jewels to her son, and that was all.

Cosway's experience of the life of a naval officer on a foreign station (without political influence to hasten his promotion) had thoroughly disappointed him. He decided on retiring from the service when the ship was "paid off." In the mean time, to the astonishment of his comrades, he seemed to be in no hurry to make use of the leave granted him to go on shore. The faithful Stone was the only man on board who knew that he was afraid of meeting his "wife." This good friend volunteered to go to the inn, and make the necessary investigation with all needful prudence. "Four years is a long time at her age," he said. "Many things may happen in four years."

An hour later Stone returned to the ship, and sent a written message on board, addressed to his brother officer, in these words: "Pack up your things at once, and join me in the boat."

"What news?" asked the anxious husband.

Stone looked significantly at the boatmen, and only answered, "Wait till we get on shore."

"Where are we going?"

"To the railway station."

They got into an empty carriage, and Stone at once relieved his friend of all further suspense.

"Nobody is acquainted with the secret of your marriage but our two selves," he began quietly. "I don't think, Cosway, you need go into mourning."

"You don't mean to say she's dead!"

"I have seen the letter which announces her death," Stone replied. "It was so short that I believe I can repeat it word for word: 'Dear Sir: We have received information of the death of our client. Please address your next and last payment, on account of the lease and goodwill of the inn, to the executors of the late Mrs. Cosway.' There, that is the letter. 'Dear Sir' means the present proprietor of the inn. He told me your wife's previous history in two words. After carrying on the business with her customary intelligence for more than three years, her health failed and she went to London to consult a physician. There she remained under the doctor's care. The next event was the appearance of an agent, instructed to sell the business, in consequence of the landlady's declining health. Add the death at a later time—and there is the beginning and the end of the story. Fortune owed you a good turn, Cosway—and Fortune has paid the debt. Accept my best congratulations."

Arrived in London, Stone went on at once to his relations in the North. Cosway proceeded to the office of the family lawyer (Mr. Atherton), who had taken care of his interests in his absence. His father and Mr. Atherton had been schoolfellows and old friends.

He was affectionately received, and was invited to pay a visit the next day to the lawyer's villa at Richmond.

"You will be near enough to London to attend to your business at the Admiralty," said Mr. Atherton, "and you will meet a visitor at my house who is one of the most charming girls in England—the only daughter of the great Mr. Restall. Good heavens! have you never heard of him? My dear sir, he's one of the partners in the famous firm of Benshaw, Restall and Benshaw."

Cosway was wise enough to accept this last piece of

information as quite conclusive. The next day Mrs. Atherton presented him to the charming Miss Restall; and Mrs. Atherton's young married daughter (who had been his playfellow when they were children) whispered to him, half in jest, half in earnest, "Make the best use of your time; she isn't engaged yet."

Cosway shuddered inwardly at the bare idea of a second marriage.

Was Miss Restall the sort of woman to restore his confidence?

She was small and slim and dark—a graceful, well-bred, brightly intelligent person, with a voice exquisitely sweet and winning in tone. Her ears, hands, and feet were objects to worship; and she had an attraction, irresistibly rare among the women of the present time—the attraction of a perfectly natural smile. Before Cosway had been an hour in the house she discovered that his long term of service on foreign stations had furnished him with subjects of conversation which favorably contrasted with the commonplace gossip addressed to her by other men. Cosway at once became a favorite, as *Othello* became a favorite in his day. The ladies of the household all rejoiced in the young officer's success, with the one exception of Miss Restall's companion (supposed to hold the place of her lost mother, at a large salary), one Mrs. Margery. Too cautious to commit herself in words, this lady expressed doubt and disapprobation by her looks. She had white hair, iron-gray eyebrows, and protuberant eyes; her looks were unusually expressive. One evening she caught poor Mr. Atherton alone, and consulted him confidentially on the subject of Mr. Cosway's income. This was the first warning which opened the eyes of the good lawyer to the nature of the "friendship" already established between his two guests. He knew Miss Restall's illustrious father well, and he feared that it might soon be his disagreeable duty to bring Cosway's visit to an end.

On a certain Saturday afternoon, while Mr. Atherton was still considering how he could most kindly and

delicately suggest to Cosway that it was time to say good-by, an empty carriage arrived at the villa. A note from Mr. Restall was delivered to Mrs. Atherton, thanking her with perfect politeness for her kindness to his daughter. "Circumstances," he added, "rendered it necessary that Miss Restall should return home that afternoon." The "circumstances" were supposed to refer to a garden-party to be given by Mr. Restall in the ensuing week. But why was his daughter wanted at home before the day of the party?

The ladies of the family entertained no doubt that Mrs. Margery had privately communicated with Mr. Restall, and that the appearance of the carriage was the natural result. Mrs. Atherton's married daughter did all that could be done. She got rid of Mrs. Margery for one minute, and so arranged it that Cosway and Miss Restall took leave of each other in her own sitting-room. The young lady appeared in the hall with her veil down. Cosway escaped to the road, and saw the last of the carriage as it drove away. In a little more than a fortnight his horror of a second marriage had become one of the dead and buried emotions of his nature. He stayed at the villa until Monday morning, as an act of gratitude to his good friends, and then accompanied Mr. Atherton to London. Business at the Admiralty was the excuse. It imposed on nobody. He was evidently on his way to Miss Restall.

"Leave your business in my hands," said the lawyer, on the journey to town, "and go and amuse yourself on the Continent. I can't blame you for falling in love with Miss Restall; I ought to have foreseen the danger, and waited till she had left us before I invited you to my house. But I may at least warn you to carry the matter no further. If you had eight thousand, instead of eight hundred a year, Mr. Restall would think it an act of presumption on your part to aspire to his daughter's hand, unless you had a title to throw into the bargain. Look at it in the true light, my dear boy, and one of these days you will thank me for speaking plainly."

Cosway promised to "look at it in the true light."

The result, from his point of view, led him into a change of residence. He left his hotel and took a lodging in the nearest by-street to Mr. Restall's palace at Kensington. On the same evening he applied (with the confidence due to a previous arrangement) for a letter at the neighboring post-office, addressed to E. C. —the initials of Edwin Cosway. "Pray be careful," Miss Restall wrote. "I have tried to get you a card for our garden-party. But that hateful creature, Margery, has evidently spoken to my father; I am not trusted with any invitation cards. Bear it patiently, dear, as I do, and let me hear if you have succeeded in finding a lodging near us."

Not submitting to this first disappointment very patiently, Cosway sent his reply to the post-office, addressed to A. R.—the initials of Adela Restall. The next day the impatient lover applied for another letter. It was waiting for him, but it was not directed in Adela's handwriting. Had their correspondence been discovered? He opened the letter in the street, and read with amazement these lines:

"Dear Mr. Cosway: My heart sympathizes with two faithful lovers, in spite of my age and my duty. I enclose an invitation to the party to-morrow. Pray don't betray me, and don't pay too marked attention to Adela. Discretion is easy. There will be twelve hundred guests. Your friend, in spite of appearances, Louisa Margery."

How infamously they had all misjudged this excellent woman! Such was the natural conclusion at which Cosway arrived. He went to the party a grateful, as well as a happy, man. The first persons known to him, whom he discovered among the crowd of strangers, were the Athertons. They looked, as well they might, astonished to see him. Fidelity to Mrs. Margery forbade him to enter into any explanations. Where was that best and truest friend? With some difficulty he succeeded in finding her. Was there any impropriety in seizing her hand, and cordially pressing it? The result of this expression of gratitude was, to say the least of

it, perplexing. Mrs. Margery behaved like the Athertons! She looked astonished to see him, and she put precisely the same question, "How did you get here?" Cosway could only conclude that she was joking. "Who should know that, dear lady, better than yourself?" he rejoined. "I don't understand you," Mrs. Margery answered sharply. After a moment's reflection, Cosway hit on another solution of the mystery. Visitors were near them; and Mrs. Margery had made her own private use of one of Mr. Restall's invitation cards. She might have serious reasons for pushing caution to the last extreme. Cosway looked at her significantly. "The least I can do is not to be indiscreet," he whispered, and left her.

He turned into a side walk, and there he met Adela at last!

It seemed like a fatality. She looked astonished; and she said, "How did you get here?" No intrusive visitors were within hearing this time. "My dear!" Cosway remonstrated, "Mrs. Margery must have told you when she sent my invitation." Adela turned pale. "Mrs. Margery?" she repeated. "Mrs. Margery has said nothing to me; Mrs. Margery detests you. We must have this cleared up. No; not now; I must attend to our guest. Expect a letter; and, for heaven's sake, Edwin, keep out of my father's way. One of our visitors, whom he particularly wished to see, has sent an excuse, and he is dreadfully angry about it."

She left him before Cosway could explain that he and Mr. Restall had thus far never seen each other.

He wandered away toward the extremity of the grounds, troubled by vague suspicions; hurt at Adela's cold reception of him. Entering a shrubbery, which seemed intended to screen the grounds, at this point, from a lane outside, he suddenly discovered a pretty little summer-house among the trees. A stout gentleman, of mature years, was seated alone in this retreat. He looked up with a frown. Cosway apologized for disturbing him, and entered into conversation as an act of politeness.

"A brilliant assembly to-day, sir."

The stout gentleman replied by an inarticulate sound —something between a grunt and a cough.

"And a splendid house and grounds," Cosway continued.

The stout gentleman repeated the inarticulate sound.

Cosway began to feel amused. Was this curious old man deaf and dumb?

"Excuse my entering into conversation," he persisted. "I feel like a stranger here. There are so many people whom I don't know."

The stout gentleman suddenly burst into speech. Cosway had touched a sympathetic fibre at last.

"There are a good many people here whom I don't know," he said gruffly. "You are one of them. What's your name?"

"My name is Cosway, sir. What's yours?"

The stout gentleman rose, with fury in his looks. He burst out with an oath, and added the intolerable question, already three times repeated by others, "How did you get here?" The tone was even more offensive than the oath.

"Your age protects you, sir," said Cosway, with the loftiest composure. "I'm sorry I gave my name to so rude a person."

"Rude?" shouted the old gentleman. "You want my name in return, I suppose? You young puppy, you shall have it; my name is Restall."

He turned his back and walked off. Cosway took the only course now open to him. He returned to his lodgings.

The next day no letter reached him from Adela. He went to the post-office. No letter was there. The day wore on to evening, and with the evening there appeared a woman who was a stranger to him. She looked like a servant; and she was the bearer of a mysterious message.

"Please be at the door that opens on the lane at 10 o'clock to-morrow morning. Knock three times at the door, and then say 'Adela.' Some one who wishes you

well will be alone in the shrubbery, and will let you in. No, sir; I am not to take anything, and I am not to say a word more." She spoke and vanished.

Cosway was punctual to his appointment. He knocked three times; he pronounced Miss Restall's Christian name. Nothing happened. He waited awhile and tried again. This time Adela's voice answered strangely from the shrubbery in tones of surprise: "Edwin, is it really you?"

"Did you expect any one else?" Cosway asked. "My darling, your message said ten o'clock—and here I am."

The door was suddenly unlocked.

"I sent no message," said Adela, as they confronted each other on the threshold.

In the silence of utter bewilderment they went together into the summer-house. At Adela's request, Cosway repeated the message, and described the woman who had delivered it. The description applied to no person known to Miss Restall. "Mrs. Margery never sent you the invitation, and, I repeat, I never sent you the message. This meeting has been arranged by some one who knows that I always walk in the shrubbery after breakfast. There is some underhand work going on——" She checked herself, and considered a little. "Is it possible——" she began, and paused again. Her eyes filled with tears. "My mind is so completely upset," she said, "that I can't think clearly of anything. Oh, Edwin, we have had a happy dream, and it has come to an end. My father knows more than we think for. Some friends of ours are going abroad to-morrow —and I am to go with them. Nothing I can say has the least effect upon my father. He means to part us forever, and this is his cruel way of doing it."

She put her arm round Cosway's neck, and lovingly laid her head on his shoulder. With tenderest kisses they reiterated their vows of eternal fidelity until their voices faltered and failed them. Cosway filled up the pause by the only useful suggestion which it was now in his power to make—he proposed an elopement.

Adela received this bold solution of the difficulty in which they were placed exactly as thousands of other young ladies have received similar proposals, before her time, and after.

She first said positively No. Cosway persisted. She began to cry, and asked if he had no respect for her. Cosway declared that his respect was equal to any sacrifice except the sacrifice of parting with her forever. He could and would, if she preferred it, die for her, but while he was alive he must refuse to give her up. Upon this she shifted her ground. Did he expect her to go away with him alone? Certainly not. Her maid could go with her, or, if her maid was not to be trusted, he would apply to his landlady, and engage "a respectable elderly person" to attend on her until the day of their marriage. Would she have some mercy on him, and just consider it? No; she was afraid to consider it. Did she prefer misery for the rest of her life? Never mind his happiness; it was her happiness only that he had in his mind. Travelling with unsympathetic people; absent from England, no one could say for how long; married, when she did return, to some rich man whom she hated—would she, could she, contemplate that prospect? She contemplated it through tears; she contemplated it to an accompaniment of sighs, kisses, and protestations—she trembled, hesitated, gave way. At an appointed hour of the coming night, when her father would be in the smoking-room, and Mrs. Margery would be in bed, Cosway was to knock at the door in the lane once more, leaving time to make all the necessary arrangements in the interval.

The one pressing necessity, under these circumstances, was to guard against the possibility of betrayal and surprise. Cosway discreetly alluded to the unsolved mysteries of the invitation and the message.

"Have you taken anybody into your confidence?" he asked.

Adela answered with some embarrassment. "Only one person," she said—"dear Miss Benshaw."

"Who is Miss Benshaw?"

"Don't you really know, Edwin? She is richer even than papa; she has inherited from her late brother one half share in the great business in the city. Miss Benshaw is the lady who disappointed papa by not coming to the garden-party. I was very miserable, dear, when they took me away from Mr. Atherton's. She happened to call the next day, and she noticed it. 'My dear,' she said (Miss Benshaw is quite an elderly lady now), 'I am an old maid, who has missed the happiness of her life through not having had a friend to guide and advise me when I was young. Are you suffering as I once suffered?' She spoke so nicely—and I was so wretched—that I really couldn't help it. I opened my heart to her."

Cosway looked grave. "Are you sure she is to be trusted?" he asked.

"Perfectly sure."

"Perhaps, my love, she has spoken about us (not meaning any harm) to some friend of hers? Old ladies are so fond of gossip. It's just possible—don't you think so?"

Adela hung her head. "I have thought it just possible myself," she admitted. "There is plenty of time to call on her to-day. I will set our doubts at rest before Miss Benshaw goes out for her afternoon drive."

On that understanding they parted.

Toward evening Cosway's arrangements for the elopement were completed. He was eating his solitary dinner when a note was brought to him. It had been left at the door by a commissioner. The man had gone away without waiting for an answer. The note ran thus:

"Miss Benshaw presents her compliments to Mr. Cosway, and will be obliged if he can call on her at nine o'clock this evening on business which concerns himself."

This invitation was evidently the result of Adela's visit earlier in the day. Cosway presented himself at the house, troubled by natural emotions of anxiety and

suspense. His reception was not of a nature to compose him. He was shown into a darkened room. The one lamp on the table was turned down low, and the little light thus given was still further obscured by a shade. The corners of the room were in almost absolute darkness.

A voice out of one of the corners addressed him in a whisper:

"I must beg you to excuse the darkened room. I am suffering from a severe cold. My eyes are inflamed, and my throat is so bad that I can only speak in a whisper. Sit down, sir. I have news for you."

"Not bad news, I hope, ma'am?" Cosway ventured to inquire.

"The worst possible news," said the whispering voice. "You have an enemy striking at you in the dark."

Cosway asked who it was, and received no answer. He varied the form of inquiry, and asked why the unnamed person struck at him in the dark. The experiment succeeded; he obtained a reply.

"It is reported to me," said Miss Benshaw, "that the person thinks it necessary to give you a lesson, and takes a spiteful pleasure in doing it as mischievously as possible. The person, as I happen to know, sent you your invitation to the party, and made the appointment which took you to the door in the lane. Wait a little, sir, I have not done yet. The person has put it into Mr. Restall's head to send his daughter abroad to-morrow."

Cosway attempted to make her speak more plainly.

"Is the person a man or a woman?" he said.

Miss Benshaw proceeded without noticing the interruption.

"You needn't be afraid, Mr. Cosway; Miss Restall will not leave England. Your enemy is all-powerful. Your enemy's object could only be to provoke you into planning an elopement, and, your arrangements once completed, to part you and Miss Restall quite as effectually as if you were at opposite ends of the world. Spiteful, isn't it? And what is worse, the mischief is as good as done already."

Cosway rose from his chair.

"Do you wish for any further explanation?" asked Miss Benshaw.

"One thing more," he replied. "Does Adela know of this?"

"No," said Miss Benshaw; "it is left to you to tell her."

There was a moment of silence. Cosway looked at the lamp. Once roused, as usual with men of his character, his temper was not to be trifled with.

"Miss Benshaw," he said, "I dare say you think me a fool; but I can draw my own conclusion, for all that. *You* are my enemy."

The only reply was a low chuckling laugh. All voices can be more or less effectually disguised by a whisper—but a laugh carries the revelation of its own identity with it. Cosway suddenly threw off the shade over the lamp and turned up the wick.

The light flooded the room, and showed him—His Wife.

THE THIRD EPOCH IN MR. COSWAY'S LIFE.

Three days had passed. Cosway sat alone in his lodging, pale and worn; the shadow already of his former self. He had not seen Adela since the discovery. The one way in which he could venture to make the inevitable disclosure was by letter. Through Mr. Atherton (to whom he had at once revealed his position) he was able to make inquiries at Mr. Restall's house. The answers simply informed him that Miss Restall was suffering from illness.

The landlady came into the room. "Cheer up, sir," said the good woman. "There is better news of Miss Restall to-day."

He raised his head. "Don't trifle with me!" he answered fretfully; "tell me exactly what the servant said."

The landlady repeated the words. Miss Restall had passed a quieter night, and had been able for a few hours to leave her room. He asked next if any letter

had arrived for him. No letter had arrived. If Adela definitely abstained from writing to him, the conclusion would be too plain to be mistaken. She had given him up—and who could blame her?

There was a knock at the street door. The landlady looked out. "Here's Mr. Stone come back, sir!" she exclaimed joyfully—and hurried away to let him in. Cosway never looked up when his friend appeared.

"I knew I should succeed," said Stone. "I have seen your wife."

"Don't speak of her!" cried Cosway. "I should have murdered her when I first saw her face if I had not instantly left the house. I may be the death of the wretch yet, if you persist in speaking of her!"

Stone put his hand kindly on his friend's shoulder.

"Must I remind you that you owe something to your old companion?" he asked. "I left my father and mother the morning I got your letter, and my one thought has been to serve you. Reward me. Be a man, and hear what it is your right and duty to know. After that, if you like, we will never refer to her again."

Cosway took his hand, in silent acknowledgment that he was right. They sat down together. Stone began.

"She is so entirely shameless," he said, "that I had no difficulty in getting her to speak. She so cordially hates you that she glories in her own falsehood and treachery. In the first place, I may tell you that she has a certain right, if she pleases, to call herself 'Miss Benshaw.' She is really the daughter of the man who founded the great house in the city. With every advantage that wealth and position could give her, the perverse creature married one of her father's footmen. From that moment her family discarded her. With the money procured by the sale of her jewels, her husband took the inn which we have such bitter cause to remember—and she carried it on after his death. So much for the past. We may now pass over a long lapse of years, and get to the time at which you and I were on the South American station, beginning to think of

the happy day when our ship would be ordered back to England. At the date at which we have now arrived, the last surviving member of her family—her elder brother—lay at the point of death. He had taken his father's place in the business, besides inheriting his father's fortune. The loss of his wife (leaving no children) rendered it necessary that he should alter his will. He deferred performing this duty. It was only at the time of his last illness that he had dictated instructions for a new will, leaving his wealth (excepting certain legacies to old friends) to the hospitals of Great Britain and Ireland. His lawyer lost no time in carrying out the instructions. The new will was ready for signature (the old will having been destroyed by his own hand), when the doctors sent a messenger to say that their patient was insensible, and might die in that condition. He did die in that condition. Your wretched wife, as next of kin, succeeded, not only to the fortune, but (under the deed of partnership) to her late brother's place in the firm: on the one easy condition of resuming the family name. She calls herself 'Miss Benshaw.' But as a matter of legal necessity she is set down in the deed as 'Mrs. Cosway Benshaw.' Her partners only now know that her husband is living, and that you are the Cosway whom she privately married. Will you take a little breathing-time, or shall I go on, and get done with it?"

Cosway signed to him to go on.

"She doesn't in the least care," Stone proceeded, "for the exposure. 'I'm the head partner,' she says, 'and the rich one of the firm; they daren't turn their backs on Me.' You remember the information I received—in perfect good faith on his part—from the man who now keeps the inn? The visit to the London doctor, and the assertion of failing health, were adopted as the best means of plausibly severing the lady's connection (the great lady now!) with a calling so unworthy of her as the keeping of an inn. Her neighbors at the seaport were all deceived by the stratagem, with two exceptions. They were both men—vagabonds who had pertina-

ciously tried to delude her into marrying them in the days when she was a widow. They refused to believe in the doctor and the declining health; they had their own suspicion of the motives which had led to the sale of the inn, under very unfavorable circumstances; and they decided on going to London, inspired by the same base hope of making discoveries which might be turned into a means of extorting money. Their contemplated victim proved equal to the emergency. The attorney whom she had employed to manage the sale of the lease and goodwill of the inn was not above accepting a handsome private fee. He wrote to the new landlord of the inn, falsely announcing his client's death, in the letter which I repeated to you in the railway carriage on our journey to London; and he deluded the two inferior rogues, when they ventured to make inquiry at his office. You and I were deceived in our turn, by the lawyer's letter. Your natural conclusion that you were free to pay your addresses to Miss Restall, and the poor young lady's innocent confidence in 'Miss Benshaw's' sympathy, gave this unscrupulous woman the means of playing the heartless trick on you which is now exposed. Malice and jealousy—I have it, mind, from herself!—were not her only motives. 'But for that Cosway,' she said (I spare you the epithet which she put before your name), 'with my money and position, I might have married a needy lord, and sunned myself in my old age in the full blaze of the peerage.' Do you understand how she hated you, now? Enough of the subject! The moral of it, my dear Cosway, is to leave this place, and try what change of scene will do for you. I have time to spare; and I will go abroad with you. When shall it be?"

"Let me wait a day or two more," Cosway pleaded.

Stone shook his head. "Still hoping, my poor friend, for a line from Miss Restall? You distress me."

"I am sorry to distress you, Stone. If I can get one pitying word from her, I can submit to the miserable life that lies before me."

"Are you not expecting too much?"

"You wouldn't say so if you were as fond of her as I am."

They were silent. The evening slowly darkened; and the landlady came in as usual with the candles. She brought with her a letter for Cosway.

He tore it open, read it in an instant, and devoured it with kisses. His highly wrought feelings found their vent in a little allowable exaggeration. "She has saved my life!" he said, as he handed the letter to Stone.

It only contained these lines:

"My love is yours, my promise is yours. Through all trouble, through all profanation, through the hopeless separation that may be before us in this world, I live yours, and die yours. My Edwin, God bless and comfort you."

THE FOURTH EPOCH IN MR. COSWAY'S LIFE.

The separation had lasted for nearly two years when Cosway and Stone paid that visit to the country house which is recorded at the outset of the present narrative. In the interval nothing had been heard of Miss Restall except through Mr. Atherton. He reported that Adela was leading a very quiet life. The one remarkable event had been an interview between "Miss Benshaw" and herself. No other person had been present; but the little that was reported placed Miss Restall's character above all praise. She had forgiven the woman who had so cruelly injured her!

The two friends, it may be remembered, had travelled to London immediately after completing the fullest explanation of Cosway's startling behavior at the breakfast-table. Stone was not by nature a sanguine man. "I don't believe in our luck," he said. "Let us be quite sure that we are not the victims of another deception."

The accident had happened on the Thames; and the newspaper narrative proved to be accurate in every respect. Stone personally attended the inquest. From a natural feeling of delicacy toward Adela, Cosway hesitated to write to her on the subject. The ever-helpful Stone wrote in his place.

After some delay the answer was received. It enclosed a brief statement (communicated officially by legal authority) of a last act of malice on the part of the late head partner in the house of Benshaw & Company. She had not died intestate, like her brother. The first clause of her will contained the testator's grateful recognition of Adela Restall's Christian act of forgiveness. The second clause (after stating that there were neither relatives nor children to be benefited by the will) left Adela Restall mistress of Mrs. Cosway Benshaw's fortune—on the one merciless condition that she did not marry Edwin Cosway. The third clause—if Adela Restall violated the condition—handed over the whole of the money to the firm in the city, "for the extension of the business, and the benefit of the surviving partners."

Some months later Adela came of age. To the indignation of Mr. Restall, and the astonishment of the "Company," the money actually went to the firm. The fourth epoch in Mr. Cosway's life witnessed his marriage to a woman who cheerfully paid half a million of money for the happiness of passing her life, on eight hundred a year, with the man whom she loved.

But Cosway felt bound in gratitude to make a rich woman of his wife, if work and resolution could do it. When Stone last spoke of him he was reading for the bar; and Mr. Atherton was waiting to give him his first brief.

NOTE.—That "most improbable" part of the present narrative, which is contained in the division called The First Epoch, is founded on an adventure which actually occurred to no less a person than a cousin of Sir Walter Scott. In Lockhart's delightful "Life" the anecdote will be found, as told by Sir Walter to Captain Basil Hall. The remainder of the present story is entirely imaginary. The writer wondered what such a woman as the landlady would do, under certain given circumstances, after her marriage—and here is the result.

Only those who care for a very terrible story should read the following by Guy de Maupassant. It is, however, one of the great delineations, and has been translated for ROMANCE by R. Hobart Smith, in a singularly idiomatic style, which preserves to a remarkable degree the striking features of the original.

A MADMAN.

HE was dead—the head of a high tribunal, the upright magistrate, whose irreproachable life was a proverb in all the courts of France. Advocates, young counsellors, judges had saluted, bowing low in token of profound respect, his grand face, pale and thin, illumined by two bright, deep-set eyes.

He had passed his life in pursuing crime and in protecting the weak. Swindlers and murderers had no more redoubtable enemy, for he seemed to read in the recesses of their souls their most secret thoughts.

He was dead, now, at the age of eighty-two, surrounded by the homage and followed by the regrets of a whole people. Soldiers in red breeches had escorted him to the tomb, and men in white cravats had shed on his grave tears that seemed to be real.

But behold the strange paper found by the dismayed notary in the desk where he had kept filed the records of great criminals! It was entitled:

WHY?

20*th June*, 1851. I have just left court. I have condemned Blondel to death! Now, why did this man kill his five children? Frequently one meets with people to whom the destruction of life is a pleasure. Yes, yes, it should be a pleasure, the greatest of all, perhaps, for is not killing most like creating? To make and to destroy! These two words contain the history of the universe, all the history of worlds, all that is, all! Why is it not intoxicating to kill?

25th June. To think that a being is there who lives, who walks, who runs. A being? What is a being? That animated thing, that bears in it the principle of motion, and a will ruling that motion. It clings to nothing, this thing. Its feet convey nothing to the ground. It is a grain of life that moves on the earth, and this grain of life, come I know not whence, one can destroy at one's will. Then nothing—more nothing. It perishes, it is finished.

26th June. Why then is it a crime to kill? Yes, why? On the contrary, it is the law of nature. Every being has the mission to kill; he kills to live, and he kills to kill. The beast kills without ceasing, all day, every instant of his existence. Man kills without ceasing, to nourish himself; but since he needs besides to kill for pleasure, he has invented the chase! The child kills the insects he finds, the little birds, all the little animals that come in his way. But this does not suffice for the irresistible need of massacre that is in us. It is not enough to kill beasts; we must kill man too. Long ago this need was satisfied by human sacrifices. Now, the necessity of living in society has made murder a crime. We condemn and punish the assassin! But as we cannot live without yielding to this natural and imperious instinct of death, we relieve ourselves, from time to time, by wars. Then a whole nation slaughters another nation. It is a feast of blood, a feast that maddens armies, and that intoxicates civilians, women and children, who read, by lamplight at night, the feverish story of massacre.

And one is to believe that one should despise those destined to accomplish these butcheries of men! No, they are loaded with honors. They are clad in gold and in resplendent stuffs; they wear plumes on their heads and ornaments on their breasts; and they are given crosses, rewards, titles of every kind. They are proud, respected, loved by women, cheered by the crowd, solely because their mission is to shed human blood! They drag through the streets their instruments of death, that the passer-by, clad in black, looks

on with envy. For to kill is the great law put by nature in the heart of existence! There is nothing more beautiful and honorable than killing!

30*th June.* To kill is the law, because nature loves eternal youth. She seems to cry in all her unconscious acts: "Quick! quick! quick!" The more she destroys, the more she renews herself.

3*d July.* It must be a pleasure, unique and full of zest, to kill; to have there, before one, the living, thinking being; to make therein a little hole, nothing but a little hole, to see that red thing flow which is the blood, which makes life; and to have before one only a heap of limp flesh, cold, inert, void of thought!

5*th August.* I, who have passed my life in judging, condemning, killing by words pronounced, killing by the guillotine those who had killed by the knife, I, I, if I should do as all the assassins have done, whom I have smitten, I, I—who would know it?

10*th August.* Who would ever know? Who would ever suspect me, me, me, especially if I should choose a being I had no interest in doing away with?

22*d August.* I could resist no longer. I have killed a little creature as an experiment, for a beginning. Jean, my servant, had a goldfinch in a cage hung in the office-window. I sent him on an errand, and I took the little bird in my hand, in my hand where I felt its heart beat. It was warm. I went up to my room. From time to time I squeezed it tighter; its heart beat faster; this was atrocious and delicious. I was near choking it. But I could not see the blood.

Then I took scissors, short nail-scissors, and I cut its throat in three strokes, quite gently. It opened its bill, it struggled to escape me, but I held it, oh! I held it—I could have held a mad dog—and I saw the blood trickle.

And then I did as assassins do—real ones. I washed the scissors, I washed my hands. I sprinkled water, and took the body, the corpse, to the garden to hide it. I buried it under a strawberry-plant. It will never be found. Every day I shall eat a strawberry from

that plant. How one can enjoy life, when one knows how!

My servant cried; he thought his bird flown. How could he suspect me? Ah! ah!

25*th August.* I must kill a man! I must!

30*th August.* It is done. But what a little thing! I had gone for a walk in the forest of Vernes. I was thinking of nothing, literally nothing. See! a child on the road, a little child eating a slice of bread and butter.

He stops to see me pass and says: "Good-day, Mr. President."

And the thought enters my head: "Shall I kill him?"

I answer: "You are alone, my boy?"

"Yes, sir."

"All alone in the wood?"

"Yes, sir."

The wish to kill him intoxicated me like wine. I approached him quite softly, persuaded that he was going to run away. And suddenly I seized him by the throat. He held my wrists in his little hands, and his body writhed like a feather on the fire. Then he moved no more. I threw the body in the ditch, then some weeds on top of it. I returned home, and dined well. What a little thing it was! In the evening, I was very gay, light, rejuvenated; I passed the evening at the Prefect's. They found me witty. But I have not seen blood! I am tranquil.

31*st August.* The body has been discovered. They are hunting for the assassin. Ah! ah!

1*st September.* Two tramps have been arrested. Proofs are lacking.

2*d September.* The parents have been to see me. They wept! Ah! ah!

6*th October.* Nothing has been discovered. Some strolling vagabond must have done the deed. Ah! ah! If I had seen the blood flow, it seems to me I should be tranquil now!

10*th October.* Yet another. I was walking by the river, after breakfast. And I saw, under a willow, a

fisherman asleep. It was noon. A spade, as if expressly for me, was standing in a potato-field near by.

I took it. I returned; I raised it like a club, and with one blow of the edge I cleft the fisherman's head. Oh! he bled, this one! Rose-colored blood. It flowed into the water, quite gently. And I went away with a grave step. If I had been seen! Ah! ah! I should have made an excellent assassin.

25*th October.* The affair of the fisherman makes a great noise. His nephew, who fished with him, is charged with the murder.

26*th October.* The examining magistrate affirms that the nephew is guilty. Everybody in town believes it. Ah! ah!

27*th October.* The nephew defends himself badly. He had gone to the village to buy bread and cheese, he declared. He swore that his uncle had been killed in his absence! Who would believe him?

28*th October.* The nephew has all but confessed, so much have they made him lose his head! Ah! ah! Justice!

15*th November.* There are overwhelming proofs against the nephew, who was his uncle's heir. I shall preside at the sessions.

25*th January.* To death! to death! to death! I have had him condemned to death! Ah! ah! The advocate-general spoke like an angel! Ah! ah! Yet another! I shall go to see him executed!

10*th March.* It is done. They guillotined him this morning. He died very well! very well! That gave me pleasure! How fine it is to see a man's head cut off!

Now, I shall wait, I can wait. It would take such a little thing to let myself be caught.

. . . . . .

The manuscript contained yet other pages, but without relating any new crime.

Alienist physicians to whom the awful story has been submitted declare that there are in the world many unknown madmen, as adroit and as terrible as this monstrous lunatic.

Mark Twain, in his delightful "Prince and Pauper," and later in another book, has given us a taste of the same sort of doctrine that is to be found in this anonymous story. It is good doctrine, too.

THE GOOD OLD TIMES.

Old Peter Piper lived in an old-fashioned house, which had seen ever so many generations of Pipers. His principal business was to talk of the "good old times." He detested everything new—all new notions, all reforms, all improvements, all inventions. He treasured up every instance of crime, every record of villainy which he could find in the newspapers, as another proof of the degeneracy of the age, which he was always reviling.

One day some neighbor said to him, "It is a pity, Mr. Piper, that you had not lived in the good old times of which you are so fond."

"I wish with all my heart I could move back into them," answered Piper. "I would exchange all your discoveries and inventions, your equal rights, and your new-fangled government, for the simplicity and quiet of those times in which people were content to be as wise as their fathers."

Now there are certain moments in every life in which, if you wish strongly enough, you will get your wish. Piper must have spoken as above on one of these critical moments, for he woke on the following morning in the good old times.

Piper's attention was first attracted by the singular look of his apartment.

He had gone to bed in a room luxuriously carpeted, and furnished with all the modern conveniences. The first thing that attracted his attention was the stone floor covered with rushes; the next, the fact that drops of water (it happened to be raining without) were trickling down on his nose. He got up and looked around

for his bath-room door. Not only was that gone, but he could find no washing conveniences; and looking out of a window, he saw various members of his family shivering about a spring, in which they seemed to be performing their ablutions. His attention was next attracted by his clothes. Where he had left his gray wig, coat, vest, and pantaloons, and the other articles of his wearing apparel, hung a barbarous-looking tunic of green, faced with fur, a sort of scarlet tight-fitting vest, scarlet leggings, which did not reach to the knee, and sandals fastened with golden clasps. Fancy old Peter Piper in such a rig as this; but what else could he do but wear them? Search as he might, his other clothes had vanished, and were not to be found. Old Piper might be ever so conscious that he looked a guy, and that he was uncomfortably cold about the legs, there was nothing to do but to wear them.

By the time that he had fairly resigned himself to wear these disagreeable garments it was late in the morning, and old Piper was hungry; so he made up his mind to descend, though feeling ridiculous enough, to the lower part of the house. Here, however, he found no preparations for breakfast; instead, his servants stood whispering together in the hall.

"How now, knaves!" exclaimed old Piper, or rather something exclaimed for him; "no breakfast! Why are ye loitering here, and ye stir not the quicker? I will make my riding-wand acquainted with your ears!"

Please to observe that old Piper was not at all responsible for this style of language; he was obliged to accept his sentences as he was his clothes.

"Marry, your worship," answered one of the servants, "here have been other things besides eating and drinking. The wild Squire of Hamilton has been down this morning and driven away all your cows. He vows that you slighted him the other day by not speaking when ye met; and Jack Muggins is out with a band of fifty, demanding tribute, and made our doors shake again; and he swears he will come back with one hundred men, and burn your house over your head, unless

you pay him, all the sooner, a thousand gold pieces, with a promise to pay as much more in three months from this time."

"Good heavens!" cried old Piper, shaking in his sandals; "I will have him bound over to keep the peace."

"You had best compromise the matter with him," suggested another servant. "He is cousin to Jim Muggins, called the Long Lance, who never rides with less than five hundred spears at his back; and they would make no more bones of pouncing on us here, and driving us out with fire and sword, than I would of eating a chicken for breakfast, by the same token that I am fasting from all but sin."

Old Piper began to feel overpowered. The strange dresses and the stranger lingo were almost too much for him, especially since he received it all on an empty stomach.

"We must get out of this," he said, feebly. "I will take the first train for any place where Jack and Jim Muggins are not riding about, with spears at their back."

"Where would you go?" returned the domestic, with a melancholy shake of the head. "You cannot ride through the forest with less than five hundred men; for they say Robin Hood is up with his men, and there is a green tunic and a long bow behind every bush and under every leaf; and there are the Knight Templars, who would offer you protection, and serve you worse than Jack Muggins; and there is the Baron Pound-of-Beef, who would pounce upon you as a hawk on a chicken, and never release you from his wettest, greenest, nastiest, darkest dungeon, till you had handed over all the money you have; and granting you escape all these perils, to whom would you appeal for help? King John won't help you against the Mugginses, for if Richard comes to his own again, there will be hot work, and John will press every spear into his service. And there is talk, too, of a war with France, in which case the country will be so burned, and ravaged, and

torn, that you jump from the frying-pan into the fire."

"I will write to the—the government about it," cried old Piper. "It is shameful, scandalous."

"And who will bear your message?" asked the servant. "Men are not made of steel, nor do they bear charmed lives, to run safe through such perils as we talk of; and in the months before we could get the answer, Jack Muggins and Long Jim may hang us twice over if they choose."

"But what right has the murdering rascal to come here and demand my money?" cried old Piper. "He ought to be sent to jail. I will write to the papers about it."

Just then a tall, stern-looking warrior rode up to the gate, followed by a dozen rascally-looking men.

"Dog!" thundered the man at old Piper, "off with your cap." And then, as old Piper stood still—"Take that, and learn another time to unbonnet before the lord of Mortier."

"That" was a tremendous blow, which ought to have killed Piper, and which felled him flat to the earth. He was on his feet again in a moment.

"What was that for?" said old Piper, trying to wipe the blood from his eyes.

"Be silent, churl!" answered the amiable lord of Mortier. "Know that I saw yesterday in thy stables such a horse as no churl should ride. If dogs like you were kept under the foot, as in the good old times, we should hear less of the evil times; but when base-born churls ride horses fit for nobles, and live in houses like this, they grow proud, and rebel against the authorities."

"What have I done?" quavered Piper.

"Dost thou parley with me, villain?" roared the lord of Mortier. "I say thou hast a horse that no churl should ride. Send him to my stables, or abide the consequences."

"But the horse is mine," argued Piper; "I bought him."

"Slave, nothing is thine. Thou and thy fellows live only because we have need of thee. But a truce to this insolence. Seize this fellow, and throw him into the dungeon where I had the Jew; and hark ye, pull out one of his teeth every day till he yields. If he is refractory, after he has lost them, try the brasier."

Two men sprang from their horses, and approached the unhappy Piper, who threw himself on his knees.

"My lord," he exclaimed, "show mercy, as you desire to receive it. The horse is thine, and whatever else thou mayst also desire."

"I thought that we should find you tractable," answered the lord of Mortier, with a villainous smile. "See that the horse is in my stables to-day; and hark ye, send with him a bag containing four hundred gold pieces. I have need of moneys."

Piper stood mute, too overwhelmed to speak, till the lord of Mortier and his followers were out of sight; then turning to his frightened domestics, he exclaimed, "Oh, hang such good old times!" and woke up glad enough to find himself in 1892.

The clever author of "Vice Versa," F. Anstey, wrote this very funny story for *Belgravia*.

AN UNDERGRADUATE'S AUNT.

Frederick Flushington belonged to a small college, and in doing so conferred upon it one of the few distinctions it could boast—namely, that of possessing the very bashfullest man in the whole university. But his college did not treat him with any excess of adulation on that account, probably from a prudent fear of rubbing the bloom off his modesty; they allowed him to blush unseen—which was the condition in which he preferred to blush.

He felt himself oppressed by a paucity of ideas and a difficulty in knowing which way to look in the presence of his fellow-men, which made him never so happy as when he had fastened his outer door and secured himself from all possibility of intrusion; though it was almost an unnecessary precaution, for nobody ever thought of coming to see Flushington.

In appearance he was a man of middle height, with a long scraggy neck and a large head, which gave him the air of being much shorter than he really was; he had little weak eyes, a nose and mouth of no particular shape, and very smooth hair of no definite color. He had a timid, deprecating air, which seemed due to the consciousness that he was an uninteresting anomaly, and he certainly was as impervious to the ordinary influence of his surroundings as any undergraduate well could be. He lived a colorless, aimless life in his little rooms under the roof, reading every morning from nine till two with a superstitiously mechanical regularity, though very often his books completely failed to convey any ideas whatever to his brain, which was not a particularly powerful organ.

If the afternoon was fine, he generally sought out his one friend, who was a few degrees less shy than him-

self, and they took a monosyllabic walk together; or if it was wet, he read the papers at the Union, and in the evenings after hall he studied "general literature" —a graceful term for novels—or laboriously spelt out a sonata upon his piano, a habit which did not increase his popularity.

Fortunately for Flushington, he had no gyp, or his life might have been made a positive burden to him, and with his bedmaker he was rather a favorite as "a gentleman what gave no trouble"—meaning that, when he observed his sherry unaccountably sinking, like the water in a lock when the sluices are up, Flushington was too delicate to refer to the phenomenon.

He was sitting one afternoon over his modest lunch of bread and butter, potted meat and lemonade, when all at once he heard a sound of unusual voices and a strange flutter of dresses coming up the winding stone staircase outside, and was instantly seized with a cold dread.

There was no particular reason for being alarmed, although there were certainly ladies mounting the steps —probably they were friends of the man opposite, who was always having his people up. But still Flushington had that odd presentiment which nervous people have sometimes that something unpleasant is on its way to them, and he half rose from his chair to shut his outer oak.

It was too late; the dresses were rustling now in his very passage—there was a pause, a few faint smothered laughs, and little feminine coughs—then two taps at the door.

"Come in," cried Flushington faintly; he wished he had been reading anything but the work by M. Zola which was propped up in front of him. It is your mild man who frequently has a taste for seeing the less reputable side of life in this second-hand way, and Flushington would toil manfully through the voluminous pages, hunting up every third word in the dictionary; with a sense of injury when, as was often the case, it was not to be found. Still, there was a sort of intellectual

orgie about it which had strong fascinations for him, while he knew enough of the language to be aware when the incidents approached the improper, though he was not always able to see quite clearly in what this impropriety consisted.

The door opened, and his heart seemed to stop and all the blood rushed violently to his head as a large lady came sweeping in, her face rippling with a broad smile of affection.

She horrified Flushington, who knew nobody with the least claim to smile at him so expansively as that; he drank lemonade to conceal his confusion.

"You don't know me, my dear Fred?" she said easily. "Of course not—how should you? I'm—for goodness sake, my dear boy, don't look so terribly frightened! I'm your aunt—your aunt Amelia, come over from Australia!"

The shock was a severe one to Flushington, who had not even known he possessed such a relative; he could only say "Oh?" which he felt even then was scarcely a warm greeting to give an aunt from the Antipodes.

"Oh, but," she added cheerily, "that's not all; I've another surprise for you; the dear girls would insist on coming up, too, to see their grand college cousin; they're just outside. I'll call them in—shall I?"

In another second Flushington's small room was overrun by a horde of female relatives, while he looked on gasping.

They were pretty girls, too, many of them; but that was all the more dreadful to him; he did not mind the plainer ones half so much; a combination of beauty and intellect reduced him to a condition of absolute imbecility.

He was once caught and introduced to a charming young lady from Newnham, and all he could do was to back feebly into a corner and murmur "Thank you," repeatedly.

He was very little better than that then as his aunt singled out one girl after another. "We won't have any formal nonsense between cousins," she said; "you

know them all by name already, I dare say—this is Milly, that's Jane, here's Flora, and Kitty, and Margaret, and that's my little Thomasina over there by the bookcase."

Poor Flushington ducked blindly in the direction of each, and then to them all collectively; he had not presence of mind to offer them chairs or cake, or anything, and besides, there was not nearly enough of anything for all of them.

Meanwhile his aunt had spread herself comfortably out in his arm-chair, and was untying her bonnet strings and beaming at him until he was ready to expire with confusion. "I do think," she observed at last, "that, when an old aunt all the way from Australia takes the trouble to come and see you like this, you might spare her just one kiss!"

Flushington dared not refuse; he tottered up and kissed her somewhere about the face, after which he did not know which way to look, he was so terribly afraid that he might have to go through the same ceremony with the cousins, which he simply could not have survived.

Happily for him, they did not appear to expect it, and he balanced a chair on its hind legs and, resting one knee upon it, waited patiently for them to begin a conversation; he could not have uttered a single word.

The aunt came to his rescue: "You don't ask after your Uncle Samuel, who used to send you the beetles?" she said reprovingly.

"No," said Flushington, who had forgotten Uncle Samuel and his beetles too; "no, how is Uncle Samuel —quite well, I hope?"

"Only tolerably so, thank you, Fred; you see, he never got over his great loss."

"No," said Flushington desperately, "of course not; it was a—a large sum of money to lose all at once."

"I was not referring to money," said she, with a slight touch of stoniness in her manner; "I was alluding to the death of your Cousin John."

Flushington had felt himself getting on rather well

just before that, but this awkward mistake—for he could not recollect having heard of Cousin John before—threw him off his balance again; he collapsed into silence once more, inwardly resolving to be lured into no more questions concerning relatives.

His ignorance seemed to have aroused pathetic sentiments in his aunt. "I ought to have known," she said, shaking her head, "they'd soon forget us in the old country; here's my own sister's son, and he doesn't remember his cousin's death! Well, well, now we're here, we must see if we can't know one another a little better. Fred, you must take the girls and me everywhere and show us everything, like a good nephew, you know."

Flushington had a horrible mental vision of himself careering about all Cambridge, followed by a long procession of female relatives—a fearful possibility to so shy a man. "Shall you be here long?" he asked.

"Only a week or so; we're at the 'Bull,' very near you, you see; and I'm afraid you think us very bold beggars, Fred, but we're going to ask you to give us something to eat. I've set my heart, so have the girls, (haven't you, dears?), on lunching once with a college student in his own room."

"There's nothing so extraordinary in it, I assure you," protested Flushington, "and—and I'm afraid there's very little for you to eat. The kitchen and buttery are closed" (he said this at a venture, as he felt absolutely unequal to facing the college cook and ordering lunch from that tremendous personage; he would rather order it from his tutor even). "But, if you don't mind potted ham, there's a little at the bottom of this tin, and there's some bread and an inch of butter, and marmalade, and a few biscuits. And there was some sherry this morning."

The girls all professed themselves very hungry, and contented with anything; so they sat round the table, and poor Flushington served out meagre rations of all the provisions he could find, even to his figs and French plums; but there was not nearly enough to go round,

and they lunched with evident disillusionment, thinking that the college luxury of which they had heard so much had been greatly exaggerated.

During luncheon the aunt began to study Flushington's features attentively. "There's a strong look of poor dear Simon about him when he smiles," she said, looking at him through her gold double glasses. "There, did you catch it, girls? Just his mother's profile (turn your face a leetle more toward the window, so as to get the light on your nose); don't you see the likeness to your aunt's portrait, girls?"

And Flushington had to sit still with all the girls' charming eyes fixed critically upon his crimson countenance; he longed to be able to slide down under the table and evade them, but of course he was obliged to remain above.

"He's got dear Caroline's nose!" the aunt went on triumphantly; and the cousins agreed that he certainly had Caroline's nose, which made Flushington feel vaguely that he ought at least to offer to return it.

Presently one of the girls whispered to her mother, who laughed indulgently. "What do you think this silly child wants me to ask you now, Fred?" she said. "She says she would so like to see what you look like with your college cap and gown on! Will you put them on, just to please her?"

So Flushington had to put them on, and walk slowly up and down the room in them, feeling all the time what a dismal spectacle he was making of himself, while the girls were plainly disappointed, and remarked that, somehow, they had thought the academical costume more becoming.

Then began a hotly-maintained catechism upon his studies, his amusements, his friends, and his mode of life generally; which he met with uneasy shiftings and short timid answers, that they did not appear to think altogether satisfactory.

Indeed, the aunt, who by this time felt the potted ham beginning to disagree with her, asked him, with something of severity in her tone, whether he went to

church regularly; and he said that he didn't go to church, but was always regular at chapel.

On this she observed coldly that she was sorry to hear her nephew was a Dissenter; and Flushington was much too shy to attempt to explain the misunderstanding; he sat quiet and felt miserable, while there was another uncomfortable pause.

The cousins were whispering together and laughing over little private jokes, and he, after the manner of sensitive men, of course imagined they were laughing at him—and perhaps he was not very far wrong on this occasion. So he was growing hotter and hotter every second, inwardly cursing his whole race and wishing that his father had been a foundling—when there came another tap at the door.

"Why, that must be poor old Sophy!" said his aunt. "Fred, you remember old Sophy—no, you can't, you were only a baby when she came to live with us, but she'll remember you. She begged so hard to be taken, and so we told her she might come on here slowly after us."

And then an old person in a black bonnet came feebly in, and was considerably affected when she saw Flushington. "To think," she quavered, "to think as my dim old eyes should see the child I've nursed on my lap growed out into a college gentleman!" And she hugged Flushington and wept on his shoulder, till he was almost cataleptic with confusion.

But as she grew calmer, she became more critical; she confessed to a certain feeling of disappointment with Flushington; he had not filled out, she said, "so fine as he'd promised to fill out." And when she asked if he recollected how he wouldn't be washed unless they put his little wooden horse on the washstand, and what a business it was to make him swallow his castor-oil, it made Flushington feel like a fool.

This was quite bad enough, but at last the girls began to go round his rooms, exclaiming at everything, admiring his pipe and umbrella racks, his buffalo horns and his quaint wooden kettle-holder, until they hap-

pened to come upon his French novel, and, being unsophisticated colonial girls with a healthy ignorance of such literature, they wanted Flushington to tell them what it was all about.

His presence of mind had gone long before, and this demand threw him into a violent perspiration; he could not invent, and he was painfully racking his brains to find some portion of the tale which would bear repetition—when there was another knock at the door.

At this Flushington was perfectly dumb with horror; he prepared himself blankly for another aunt with a fresh relay of female cousins, or more old family servants who had washed him in his infancy, and he sat there cowering.

But when the door opened, a tall, fair-haired, good-looking young fellow, who from his costume had evidently just come up from the tennis-court, came bursting in impulsively.

"Oh, I say!" he began, "have you heard—have you seen? Oh, beg pardon, didn't see, you know!" he added, as he noticed the extraordinary fact that Flushington had people up.

"Oh, let me introduce you," said Flushington, with a vague idea that this was the proper thing to do. "Mr. Lushington, Mrs.—no, I don't know her name—my aunt—my cousins."

The young man, who had just been about to retire, bowed and stared with a sudden surprise. "Do you know," he said slowly to the other, "I rather think that's my aunt!"

"I—I'm afraid not," whispered Flushington; "she seems quite sure she's mine."

"Well, I've got an aunt and cousins I've never seen before coming up to-day," said the new-comer, "and yours is uncommonly like the portrait of mine."

"If they belong to you, do take them away!" said Flushington feebly; "I don't think I can keep up much longer."

"What are you whispering about, Fred?" cried the aunt. "Is it something we are not to know?"

"He says he thinks there's been a mistake, and you're not my aunt," explained Flushington.

"Oh, does he?" she said, drawing herself up indignantly. "And what does he know about it—I didn't catch his name, who is he?"

"Fred Lushington," he said; "that's my name."

"And who are you, if he's Fred Lushington?" she inquired, turning upon the unfortunate owner of the rooms.

"I'm Frederick Flushington," he stammered; "I'm sorry—but I can't help it!"

"Then you're not my nephew at all, sir!" cried the aunt.

"Thank you very much," said Flushington gratefully.

"You see," her real nephew was explaining to her, "there isn't much light on the staircase, and you must have thought his name over the door was 'F. Lushington,' so in you went, you know! The porter told me you'd been asking for me, so I looked in here to see whether anything had been heard of you, and here you are."

"But why didn't he tell me?" she said, for she was naturally annoyed to find that she had been pouring out all her pent-up affection over a perfect stranger, and she even had a dim idea that she had put herself in rather a ridiculous position, which of course made her feel very angry with Flushington. "Why couldn't he explain before matters had gone so far?"

"How was I to know?" pleaded Flushington; "I dare say I have aunts in Australia, and you said you were one of them. I thought very likely you knew best."

"But you asked after Uncle Samuel?" she said accusingly. "You must have had some object—I cannot say what—in encouraging my mistake; oh, I'm sure of it!"

"You told me to ask after him, and I did," said the unhappy Flushington; "I thought it was all right. What else was I to do?"

The cousins were whispering and laughing together all this time and regarding their new cousin with shy

admiration, very different from the manner in which they had looked at poor Flushington; and the old nurse, too, was overjoyed at the exchange, and declared that she felt sure from the first that her master Frederick had not turned out so undersized as him, meaning Flushington.

"Yes, yes," said Lushington hastily, "quite a mistake, on both sides; quite sure Flushington isn't the man to go and intercept any fellow's aunt."

"I wouldn't have done it for worlds, if I had known!" he protested very sincerely.

"Well," she said, a little mollified, "I'm very sorry we've all disturbed you like this, Mr.—Mr. Flushington" (the unlucky man said something about not minding it now); "and now, Fred, my boy, perhaps you will show us the way to the right rooms?"

"Come along, then!" said he; "I'll run down and tell them to send up some lunch" (they did not explain that they had lunched already). "You come too, Flushington, and then after lunch you and I will row the ladies up to Byron's Pool?"

"Yes, do come, Mr. Flushington," the ladies said kindly, "just to show you forgive us!"

But Flushington wriggled out of it; to begin with, he did not consider he knew his neighbor sufficiently well, as they had only had a nodding acquaintance before, and, besides, he had had enough of female society for one day.

Indeed, long after that, he would be careful in fastening his door about luncheon time, and if he saw any person in Cambridge who looked as if she might by any possibility turn out to be a relation, he would flee down a back street.

This vigorous sketch of life on the plains has been written for ROMANCE by Ed Towse.

FLOTOW, THE BANNOCK.

FLOTOW, a Bannock outcast who led a desperate band of renegade Arapahoes, was easily the worst Indian in all the mountain country in 1869. The marauders made annual trips from Wind River in Wyoming to White River in Colorado, and always left a frightful trail. They murdered, plundered and burned, carrying on the work of devastation with appalling thoroughness. Emboldened by the success of a series of raids, the band essayed to sack the town of Rawlins. They were driven off, and left two dead braves as bodily evidence of the marksmanship of courageous citizens who had quickly responded to the alarm.

Flotow and his gang had become a standing and awful menace to the settlements of central Wyoming. It was quite generally agreed that the extermination of the cruel old fox and his followers was the only recourse of the whites. The existence of the latter was one of alarming uncertainty. The mob of savages travelled rapidly and under cover. They would kill a family, not sparing women or children, burn ranch buildings and leave with the horses at daylight. In twenty-four hours they would swoop down upon another pioneer home a hundred miles away and repeat the work of murder, incendiarism and theft.

A cheerful bit of barbarism little known to the world was practised when Flotow and his men happened upon a flock of sheep. The tenders were shot down as they ran, and the dogs knocked in the head and laid aside for a feast. Then the braves, each carrying a big knife with sharp point and keen blades, ran among the trembling, bleating sheep. They would grasp an animal by one hind leg and run the knife through the member just below the joint. The other hoof would be inserted in the slit. Here they had the humorous paradox of a three-

legged sheep with all four feet in sight. The poor brutes would die in great agony in about four days. It was simply impossible to extricate the uncut hind leg. This ingenious cruelty was sometimes varied by cutting a hole in one ear and thrusting a foreleg into it. Thus was destroyed the ability to travel, unless the ear was torn, which happened too often to suit the redskins. In half-a-day these Indians would destroy a band of 5,000 sheep. They considered the work a great lark.

This Flotow, whose name has never been interpreted, was the biggest, cheekiest, shrewdest and most repulsive-looking Indian I ever set eyes upon. He was more than six feet tall, straight, broad-shouldered, thick-necked and well-muscled, with a deep chest. In battle with Indians he was reputed the equal of five combatants. No white man ever lived who could handle him. Added to his unsurpassed strength was incredible agility and perfect knowledge of all styles of warfare. His craftiness kept his own men on their guard. He understood English well, but would converse only in his own tongue. Flotow did not sport any of the remarkable toggery issued to his people by the government, excepting not even the blankets, for these he exacted from the Navajoes. The wretch would come boldly into settlements to trade, with blood still on his hands, and was the cleverest of swappers.

As soon as possible after Flotow's descent on Rawlins, a party of men, sworn to kill him, started on the trail of the band. They were followed by a detachment of cavalry from Fort Steele. Lieut. French, as brave a man as ever wore the uniform, assumed command of all when the civilians were overtaken.

In just a week,—and it was an exciting season,—the pursuing party landed on Flotow in camp at evening. The reds were in a wild and isolated mountain ravine, and had neglected to place sentries. Though surprised, the Indians made a gallant fight, but the assaulting force was the stronger in numbers and was simply determined to win.

A full score of dead and dying Indians soon lay within

fifty yards of the central tepee. Great was the delight of both citizens and soldiers to find Flotow just recovering from the shock caused by a bullet which had grazed his side. In ten minutes he was all right physically, but his mental distress was deep. His chagrin threw him into silent rage. He only glared at his captors and held his tongue.

Flotow was made a prisoner of war. He was allowed to ride his own pony, and had an escort of four men. At night, after the first day's homeward march, the captive chief was given a place and a blanket beside the camp-fire. His guard was six citizens and an equal number of regulars. Lieut. French made the squad quite a speech. He said it was beneath the dignity of an American soldier to maltreat a captive foe. Abuse of Flotow would result in discipline of him who did it. To allow a prisoner to escape was an ineffaceable blot on the honor of the army.

"I charge you," said the officer, "to treat the big Injun with all the consideration due a prisoner of war, but if he makes a move to escape, shoot him down without hestitation. Remember, let there be no escape."

It was pretty well understood among the men that they were to put Flotow out of the way before daylight.

About eleven o'clock the camp was quiet. A fun-loving veteran, who had been with Grant in the Wilderness and who had fought Indians on the Platte, thrust his bayonet into the fire and let it come to a white heat. Flotow was sitting with his head between his knees and dozing. The soldier fished his bayonet from the embers with a couple of twigs, and very carefully laid it across the sleeping chief's feet. In a twinkling the steel sank into the moccasined toes. Flotow, with a shriek of pain, jumped high into the air.

Five or six shots broke the stillness, and the dead body of a red-skinned fiend fell across the camp-fire. The corporal of the guard reported that the prisoner had made a wild jump, as though to break for the bushes. Lieut. French complimented the men on their watchfulness.

The following story is not quite a fairy-tale, but it is the next thing to it, and quite as good. Its author's name is unknown, but it first appeared in *London Society*.

COUNT VON MÜLLER.

A Tale of Feudal Law.

CHAPTER I.

THE EXPLOIT OF FRITZ THE MILLER.

It is more than five hundred years since this little valley and all the surrounding country were ruled over by the good Margrave, Otto the Hunter.

Otto the Hunter was a brave old man who, in his younger days, had borne arms against the Kaiser in the Palatinate, but afterward he did fealty to the Emperor, and became one of his bosom friends. He had three stalwart sons (who have nothing to do with this story) and one only daughter, the blue-eyed Ermentrude, a little fair-haired child twelve years old, who was the light of her old father's eyes, and whom he hoped to marry some day to some other Margrave or Elector.

Now, in those days there were wolves in the Rhineland. Not many, indeed, for his ancestors had pretty well hunted them down; but in the cold winter days they would sometimes steal out of the Black Forest, and be seen prowling about in search of prey.

The old castle of the Margrave, which, about a century afterward, was battered into ruins by a French army, stood in those days on a craggy hill overlooking the fair plain on which the city of Wolfsteinberg now stands. Surrounding it was nothing but a noble stretch of woodland, where the great oaks and pine-trees made miniature forests here and there, diversified with broad, open glades, which the wild flowers in the spring-time turned into natural gardens. It was in one

of these glades, exactly where the Grand Duke's new schloss is now standing, and on the bank of the little stream that has now been used to form the artificial lake in the new park, that in those days Fritz the miller had his rude hut and his water-wheel. Fritz Müller, as he was called, was a hale and hearty man in the prime of life; and many and many a time did the little lady from the castle wander down, sometimes with her nurse, sometimes alone, to gather the wild flowers on the banks of the brook, and watch the mill-wheel and the rushing water that foamed beneath it.

Now, the Margrave, among his other good and generous acts, had published a solemn decree on the subject of wolves. There were many knights within the confines of his territory who hunted the wild boar and the deer, and it occurred to him that, if they would only be as zealous in destroying wolves as in bagging big game for their own tables, it would be far better for the poor people whom he ruled. Otto was a friend of the poor. And the edict which he published about the wolves was to this effect: that whoso should slay a wolf with his own hand should, by that very act, become the owner of the spot on which he spilt its blood, and of one square acre round about, to hold unto himself and his heirs forever.

And now came a great and terrible event. It was a lovely November afternoon, in what is called in Germany, as well as England, "All Hallows' Summer," when Fritz the Miller was busy about his mill, and moving carelessly to and fro among the piles of sacks that lay by his cabin-door. He had been splitting wood for his winter's fire, and his cleaving-axe was in his hand. Suddenly he heard a wild scream, and his blood ran cold; for the voice that pierced his ears was surely that of the little lady from the castle. He rushed to the door. Flying toward him, with her arms thrown forward and her long hair floating in the wind, was little Ermentrude, and a few yards behind her were three full-grown wolves in hot pursuit.

Fritz dashed forward with the speed of thought. He

was just in time. His axe was still grasped in his right hand, and he only just reached the child and snatched her from the ground with his left at the very moment when the wolves were making a fierce spring at her. In their headlong charge they swept right past: and Fritz, seeing a tree at some little distance in front, made for it, and reached it before the wolves could check their course and turn round again. Fritz saw at a glance that there must be a fight for life. The wolves were splendid specimens of their breed, and he saw hunger and ferocity gleaming in their eyes. Planting himself with his back to the tree, and his little charge pressed firmly against his left shoulder, he brandished his axe above his head and waited for the attack.

Headlong came on the wolves, with their usual impetuosity; but happily, in turning round, they had scattered, and one was before the other. The first that made a spring at the miller received his death-blow right in the center of his forehead. The miller's nerves were firm as steel, and he dealt the blows as truly as if he had been cleaving a log of wood for his fire. But the second wolf was too quick for him. Before he could bring his axe round again the wolf was at his throat. His teeth grazed his flesh and fixed themselves in the leathern apron that was tied round his neck. This gave way, and down fell the wolf. Fritz took two steps to one side, to give his arm room to strike, and, with a quick blow, half-severed the brute's head from his body. But he had still to try conclusions with the third, which was the largest and fiercest of the three. When Fritz had first caught up the child, the third wolf's headlong speed had carried it far beyond its companions; so that it came to the attack several seconds after both of them had fallen. But when it did come, it came in grim earnest. With a fearful howl it leaped right at the brave miller's throat. He stepped aside a little, causing it to miss its aim; but as it dropped, the brute caught his right hand in its mouth and bit it horribly. It again returned to

the charge, and this time managed to get hold of the miller's jerkin with its teeth, where it hung, for a second or two, pendulous. The miller could not strike, and was at a sad disadvantage, because his left hand was firmly holding his precious charge, who never uttered one cry, but clung to his neck with trembling arms. But he shook himself free from his assailant, which, however, again and again renewed the attack, bounding up time after time, evidently with the purpose of seizing the miller by the throat, and giving him no chance to make a fair blow with his weapon. All the time the brute was howling in a fearful manner, and the stout miller, whose blood was now flowing freely, was beginning to think that his hour was come. But the thought of the precious charge that he sheltered on his shoulder buoyed up his courage, and, mustering all his strength, he gave a sudden jerk to free himself from the beast, and, running several yards, turned round in a new position. With a savage howl the wolf rushed at him again open-mouthed; but this time the trusty axe and the true hand did their work, and the red blood spurted into the air from a death-wound between the eyes.

Thus did Fritz slay the three wolves, saving the little lady of the castle from a ghastly death, and her father's noble house from bitter mourning. The fame of the deed flew far and wide, and the name of Fritz Müller was soon in all men's mouths. Bonfires were lit on every hill in Otto's territory, to show the people's joy at the saving of his daughter's life. Men and women came by hundreds from all parts to shake hands with the brave Fritz, and congratulate him on his victory. Nor was the Margrave behind his subjects in his gratitude to the saviour of his child. With noble warmth he pressed him to his bosom, peasant though he was, and told him that he had saved two lives, his daughter's and her father's; for if she had fallen a victim, it would have brought his own gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. He at once gave orders for a wolf-stone to be cut and set up on the spot where the

deed was done, and for three acres to be measured round it, to be handed over for ever to Fritz Müller and his descendants. But here a little thing cropped up that marred the joy of all the people, and for a time caused bad blood between the nobles and the peasantry. The Kaiser had lately renewed an old decree of the empire, that no German soil could lawfully be held by any one but a German and a noble. Fritz, brave as he was, had no claim to belong to any but the peasant class, and the great men who had the ear of the Margrave took good care that he should not forget the law. And so it came to pass that the brave Fritz, though he saw the wolf-stone set up to commemorate his deed, yet was debarred from the more substantial fruit of his victory by an imperial law which was almost obsolete. But fate has sometimes in reserve a more than poetical justice, and after four hundred and fifty years had passed away the wolf-stone was heard of again.

CHAPTER II.

FRITZ MÜLLER, THE COURT TAILOR.

Our story skips over several centuries.

The social earthquake of the French Revolution, which set up and pulled down so many royal houses, had left the dynasty of Wolfsteinberg untouched. The Margrave of the day had been one of those who so unpatriotically assisted the Great Napoleon; but the only reward that he received for his perfidy was the substitution of the grand-ducal title for the time-honored name of Margrave. The old castle where Otto the Good had lived his time had long been in ruins, and a new palace had gradually grown out of a hunting-castle, built close to the spot where Fritz the miller had immortalized himself. Their Serene Highnesses the first and second Grand Dukes had enlarged and decorated it in the style of the period, and the burghers of the new city that grew up round about it thought that Versailles itself could hardly eclipse it.

But, alas, there was a very big skeleton in the grand-ducal cupboard. His Serene Highness was wofully in debt. He owed money everywhere. He was in arrears with his soldiers, and his court musicians, and his purveyors, and his ministers. Above all, if the truth must be told, he was terribly in debt to his court tailor. He had not a large family to support, having only one son and one daughter; but they were both old enough to help their illustrious father in piling up a heap of bills. The heir-apparent had achieved a great success in that line both in Paris and in Vienna; and the beautiful Princess Gertrude, who had just reached her twenty-first year, was as clever in making debts as in making conquests. Her dresses were the wonder of her father's subjects; but, sad to say, none of them had been paid for.

The court tailor was Heinrich Müller, the only son and successor of the late Herr Müller, who had made a considerable fortune in military tailoring during the wars of Napoleon, and who had bequeathed to his son not only a handsome business, but a name which, in one sense, was as illustrious as that ofthe Grand Duke himself. For, although he was only a tradesman, he was the lineal descendant of the heroic Fritz the miller, whose deed of valor I have already chronicled. Add to this that the present court tailor, Heinrich Müller, was a well-educated and handsome young fellow. He had studied at the University of Strasburg; and if a slight scar, which he got in one of his many duels there, took anything from his good looks, it certainly made him more interesting, and almost made up in popular opinion for his want of aristocratic blood. It was thought that, when his old father died, he would throw up the business, and take a commission in the army; but, to the astonishment of every one, he did no such thing. He still continued to measure his serene master for pantaloons, and the Princess Gertrude for riding-habits.

If any one supposed, however, that Heinrich was without ambition, he was very much mistaken. It

was often noticed how fond he was of getting into the great dining-room at the schloss, and feasting his eyes on the picture of his brave ancestor slaying the wolves; and he had made a model of the old wolf-stone in the park, and placed it on top of the great china stove that stood in his workshop.

Under the circumstances, Heinrich Müller was a little bit of a mystery; but at last a rumor got abroad that struck every one dumb, and when it was carried by the Prime Minister, old Baron von Dernfeld, to the grand-ducal ears, his Serene Highness almost fell down in a fit. It was said that the rich and handsome young tailor was in love with the Princess Gertrude.

There was a long and anxious conference that night between the Prime Minister and the Grand Duke. The sun was already slanting his rays in at the window before they separated; but, turn the matter over as they could, they found no sufficient answer to the terrible question, "What is to be done?"

CHAPTER III.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

The matter would have been easy enough to settle if it had not been for the horrible pile of bills that were due to the aspiring tailor. Now it was clear why he had been so accommodating. He had never once asked for a single mark. He had supplied suits for the grand-ducal family, and court dresses for the servants, and theatrical dresses for the stage, and only a few months before he had supplied new uniforms to all the army—about sixty-two privates and thirty officers—without so much as a murmur. What was to be done?

Baron von Dernfeld was a shrewd old man. In appearance he was not unlike a weasel; but his blood was as blue as his master's, and he felt the terrible disgrace that threatened the grand-ducal house. He was nearly sixty years old, and he had spent a tolerably long life in advising two successive Grand Dukes. He was a

diplomatist, too, of the old school, and nobody appreciated more than he did the great diplomatic axiom that speech was given to man in order to conceal his thoughts. He was rather slow in seeing his way in any emergency; but the reason of this, perhaps, was that his way was always so roundabout that it took a very long time for his mind to get over the ground. Consequently it was not surprising that, although he had spent a whole night in discussing the great family difficulty with his serene master, he was as far from seeing his way out of it at the end as he was at the beginning. He had got far enough, however, to appreciate the situation in all its gravity. The Princess was evidently in love with the tailor; the tailor was certainly rich and handsome, and the Grand Duke was certainly hopelessly in debt to the tailor. But his diplomatic mind did not give up the great conundrum. For several days he secluded himself in his own apartments in the palace, and it was reported that he smoked more tobacco and drank more beer during those days than he had done for many a long year before. But, as the old adage goes, all things come to those who wait; and at length a bright idea flashed into the old minister's mind, and he hurried away to the grand-ducal chamber to pour his advice into his master's ear.

It was to this effect: the tailor must be dealt with diplomatically. He must be treated with the utmost cordiality, just as if his amorous designs were utterly unknown and unsuspected. The bills must be all paid, not in the coin of the realm—for that was impossible—but in some other equivalent; for princes can give gifts which aspiring young men who are not poor prize more than money. And when once the bills were receipted in full, then the audacious tailor should be duly kicked out of the palace and the grand duchy. This was the baron's scheme.

The Grand Duke fully endorsed his adviser's opinion, as, indeed, he always did. It was therefore determined that the tailor should be smiled on, and that confidential *pourparlers* should be commenced, with

a view to induce the tailor to forego his pecuniary claims in consideration of his being made a "von." No one who has not been in Germany can understand the boldness of this step. To be a "von" is to be a nobleman, even though no title stands before it. It raises a man at once above the class of *bourgeoisie*, and places him among the aristocracy. And not only himself but all his children and descendants for ever. Nay, more, it has a backward as well as forward effect, and ennobles his family, root and branch, ancestors and descendants. Consequently such a patent of nobility was and is beyond price; and if the Grand Duke could only bring himself to confer it upon Heinrich Müller, he would be more than repaid for all that was owing to him. It was, however, a bold and unusual step to take; and Baron von Dernfeld would scarcely have ventured to make such a suggestion to the Grand Duke, even under the pressure of the heaviest difficulties, if he had not been prepared to back it up by weighty diplomatic arguments.

But this is how he reasoned: "This impudent tailor is secretly in love with the Princess Gertrude. He fully understands that between him and her stands the impassable gulf that yawns between the common people and the nobility. If we offer to create him a 'von,' he will think that heaven itself is favoring his suit, that the chasm is about to be filled up, and that, when he is a real Von Müller, he may be able with some hope of success to declare his passion. We will make him a 'von,' then, in order to get out of his financial clutches; and that once done, leave the rest to us."

The scheme was not ill-conceived. Heinrich Müller had no inkling at all of what was going forward; but if he had been a diplomatist he would have suspected that some mischief was brewing, from the fact that both the Grand Duke and the Minister were so extraordinarily polite to him. They smiled at him whenever they passed him in their carriages, and the old Baron actually went down to the shop himself to be measured for a new court-dress. Shortly after, a valet from the schloss

brought him a command from his Serene Highness to be at the castle the next evening after dinner. He obeyed, and was closeted for a short time with the Prime Minister, and then for a short time with the Grand Duke. Everything was arranged without a hitch. The Minister commenced by explaining that the high character and education of Herr Müller had evidently raised him high above his position, and that his Serene Highness had come to the conclusion that he could efficiently fill a court office if he would retire from all connection with trade. The Grand Duke, therefore, had for a long time contemplated asking him to give up his present occupation, for which there could be no further necessity, seeing how great was his well-known wealth, and thereupon conferring on him a diploma of nobility and creating him a "von." One only difficulty stood in the way. His Serene Highness felt bound in honor to liquidate all outstanding liabilities to him before making any such proposition, but to tell the candid truth he began to fear it would be several years before he would be able to do this in full. The Prime Minister, therefore, anxious to be of service to such a superior young man as Heinrich, took upon himself to let him know what was designed for him; and, in the interest of all concerned, ventured to suggest that it would be far better for Heinrich, in view of his future career, which was certain to be distinguished, to secure the honor *at once*. He could certainly do so if he would generously forego his pecuniary claims, and give a receipt in full for all that was owing to him by the court.

Heinrich listened to all this with grave attention. There is no denying that his heart beat fast as he heard the unexpected good news. Willingly, indeed, would he have paid thrice the sum that was owing to him in order to become a "von"; and, without a moment's hesitation, he accepted the offer. But he was not a simpleton. He took all the courteous sayings of the old Minister for exactly what they were worth; and, as he shook hands with him at the conclusion of the bar-

gain and was shown to the Grand Duke's apartments, he mentally told himself that the "noble scruples" and "long-cherished intentions" of his Serene Highness were fictions of the Minister's brain, and that, as a matter of fact, he was buying his vonship with a certain number of thousands of marks. The Grand Duke himself was all affability and condescension; and it was agreed that in the course of a few days the patent of nobility should be drawn up and formally bestowed upon him, and that at the same time he should sign a receipt for all moneys due to himself or to his father.

And now a curious circumstance occurred. During the few days that elapsed between the promise of the Grand Duke and its performance, Heinrich Müller made a journey to the city of Strasburg, where, it may be remembered, he had studied at the University. It was generally understood that he had gone there on business, and the Prime Minister and his master thought it only natural, as he would no doubt have plenty of matters to arrange in connection with retiring from trade. But, as a matter of fact, Heinrich, as soon as ever he found himself in the learned city, betook himself, not to any tradesman, but to a certain snuffy old gentleman named Dr. Schlippenhammer, a man whose name was famous throughout the Fatherland as a learned jurist, and the highest living authority on feudal and imperial law. What passed at the long interviews between Heinrich and the Doctor need not here be related; but suffice it to say that many ancient tomes were consulted and compared, and the statutes of emperors and diets, ranging over hundreds of years, were unearthed and pondered over. After three days Heinrich returned to Wolfsteinberg; and it was observed by every one that he seemed brimful of happiness.

On the day before he was summoned to the palace to receive his patent he casually met Baron von Dernfeld in the park. They greeted each other most cordially: the old man was gushing and fatherly, the

young man was smiling and full of reverence; but an observant bystander would have been puzzled to decide which had the more diplomatic eye.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DIPLOMA OF NOBILITY.

In due time his Serene Highness the Grand Duke of Wolfsteinberg commanded the attendance of Heinrich Müller at the schloss. With a firm, quick step the young man hastened to obey the summons. The gorgeous lackeys of the palace, whose plush suits had been made at his own expense, ushered him with great respect into the state dining-room. Heinrich was pleased at this, for the thought flashed through his mind that nowhere could the scene that was to follow be more appropriate than in that great chamber where the heroic deed of his brave ancestor was commemorated on the wall. On entering the room he found the Grand Duke and his Prime Minister chatting quietly by the table. Evidenly the affair was to be merely a formal one. Perhaps Heinrich was a little disappointed at this, for he had thought that the Grand Duke might have made a court ceremonial of the affair, and so invested it with more dignity. But no matter. He was received with quiet politeness—cool politeness would perhaps be more accurate.

"His Serene Highness," said the old Baron, "has been graciously pleased to affix his seal and signature to this document, whereby, in virtue of the rights and privileges granted to his house by the Emperor Conrad IV., he is authorized to ennoble any of his subjects who have done good service to the common weal. It will now be my pleasing duty to countersign it, while you will have the goodness to place your signature to the receipt which I have here prepared for you."

There was something so stiff and even hostile in the smoothness with which this was spoken that Heinrich's

face grew very pale. For a moment he suspected treachery.

"Will you allow me, Baron, to read the diploma?"

"Certainly," said the Minister, spreading it out on the table.

Heinrich, with the quick eye of a student, read it from beginning to end. It was correct in every form. He felt sure that not even the forensic acumen of his friend Dr. Schlippenhammer could have questioned its validity. He ran his eye over the receipt which had been prepared for his signature, and that also was correct.

The Minister handed a pen to Heinrich, and, taking another himself, they each signed their names; Heinrich putting his to the receipt, the Baron countersigning the diploma.

"I think that business is finished," said the Baron, handing the receipt to the Grand Duke.

"Shall I now retire?" said Heinrich with equal coldness, folding up his diploma and placing it in his breast pocket.

"No, not quite yet," said the old Baron, glancing quietly at the Grand Duke, who, all the time, had stood silently on one side, giving an occasional twirl to his Napoleonic moustache; "not quite yet. To be candid with you, Herr von Müller, this is a mere preliminary to the real business that we have to discuss together."

"A preliminary, Baron? Pray explain your meaning!"

"I will do so in the fewest possible words. You, sir, have up to the present time had certain heavy claims upon the house of Wolfsteinberg. Those claims are now paid off, and it is my painful duty to charge you with an act of audacity which has determined our sovereign to expel you from his dominions."

A quiet smile stole over Heinrich's face as he said, "Go on, Baron; pray go on."

"We are not so blind, sir, as to be unaware of the fact that you have taken advantage of your position as the court tailor——"

"I note your sarcasm, Baron; pray go on."

"Taken advantage, I say, of your position to try and win the affections of the Lady Gertrude, an act of insolence and audacity which is beyond pardon. I have only to say, therefore, in the name of his Serene Highness, that, without a day's delay, you must leave the grand duchy, and never venture to show your face here again. I hope you understand me. We will now say good-evening."

"Yes," chimed in the Grand Duke, "you are a detected intriguer, and I give you fair warning that if you remain in my capital more than four and twenty hours, I will order my officers to expel you by force."

With another twirl of his moustache the Grand Duke marched toward the door, followed by his Prime Minister, leaving Heinrich standing by the table.

"Stay!" cried out Heinrich, still quiet and collected, but with a strange light in his gray eyes. "Your Serene Highness has been good enough to express your views to me; I have now a few views to express to you." Saying this he stepped forward quickly and placed himself between his sovereign and the door. "You will have to hear me, and you may as well hear me at once."

If all the German heroes who were painted on the wall had jumped down into the room, the Grand Duke and his Minister could not have appeared more thunderstruck.

"Donner und Blitz!" shouted the Grand Duke, laying his hand upon his sword, "what does this mean?"

"It means, your Highness, that in the last half-hour you and I have changed places. Do you know who I am?"

"What in the name of heaven do you mean?" stammered the old Baron.

"Do you know, I ask, who I am? and do you know the feudal laws of Germany? But I see you are hopelessly in the dark. Look yonder to that fresco on the wall, and tell me if you remember the deed of my great ancestor Fritz the miller?"

"What do you mean, base-born varlet?" cried the Duke. "What has that old legend to do with us?"

"I am no longer base-born," replied Heinrich. "I am a noble, with the patent of nobility in my possession, and not only all who come after me, but all who went before in my house are noble. Yonder hero, who slew the wolves on this very spot, was noble, and being noble this land and all that stands on it is his, and in his right I claim it. This is no madness, sire; this is the old law of the empire, and I will enforce it."

"Great God!" cried the Grand Duke, as the gravity of the situation dawned upon him; "can this be true, or is it all a hideous dream?"

"Nay, more," continued Heinrich, "I have searched the feudal statutes of the last four hundred years, and I find that, by a solemn decree issued at the time when the old castle of the Margraves was destroyed and this schloss was erected in its stead, the Margravate of Wolfsteinberg was attached for ever as a fief to the owner of this castle; so that, if I am the owner of Wolfsteinberg, as owner I surely am, I am also by that very fact Margrave and Grand Duke. I claim, therefore, that by my becoming a nobleman the only bar has been removed that stood between me and the throne, and that it is no longer you, but I, who am the master here."

The Grand Duke stood like a statue. He was simply thunderstruck. Even the old Baron's diplomacy was at fault, and he was at a loss for words, when suddenly the door by which they were all grouped was opened, and in walked the Princess Gertrude.

"I have come to congratulate you," she said with a beaming smile, "on your new rank. I hope I am the first to do so."

This was an awkward speech; for what Heinrich's rank at that moment precisely was perhaps no one was quite sure, not even the great Schlippenhammer.

However, Heinrich accepted her proffered hand, and, saluting it respectfully, thanked her gravely for her good wishes.

"Gertrude," said the Grand Duke (if we may still give him this title), "we are engaged on serious business. We have discovered some unexpected difficulties in our way."

"Then, papa," replied the maiden, with a smile, "perhaps I can help to solve them. I know that you have determined to get rid of Heinrich; but I may as well say now as later, that for six months we have been betrothed to one another, and nothing you can do and nothing you can say will ever make me give him up."

A dead silence fell upon all the company at these firm and impassioned words. Had the Princess made this declaration half-an-hour sooner her father would certainly have burst out into a storm of grand-ducal indignation and discharged a volley of Teutonic expletives that would have made the palace ring. But at the present moment he was quite cowed. He covered his face with his hands and sank into a chair without a word. Even Heinrich was touched at the sight of the old man's sorrow; and while Gertrude sprang to her father's side and tried to take his hand into her own—for she was a gentle, womanly creature, after all, and loved her father dearly—the young man who was the cause of all her trouble plucked the old Baron to one side, and hastily suggested that nothing further should be said at present, but that they should meet again to-morrow, and look at the situation calmly.

"But remember this," said Heinrich, with a return of firmness, "as sure as there is law in Germany, I have your master in my power. You know now what I really want. I love the Princess with all my soul, and she loves me; and I will risk everything I have to win her. That done, I care for nothing else besides."

Saying this, he gave one passionate glance in the direction of the now weeping Gertrude, and walking rapidly down the long hall, passed out at the further door.

The thought flashed into the old Minister's mind, as he watched the retreating figure, that just as they had bought off the tailor's bills with a diploma of nobility,

they might now be obliged to buy off his new and extraordinary claims by the hand of the Princess. Alas for the glory of the old house of Wolfsteinberg!

It is not necessary to give a full account of the anxious conference that took place that same evening between the heart-broken Duke and his crafty Minister. They both commenced by declaring emphatically that Heinrich's claims were preposterous and absurd. But then there was an unpleasant look of reality in them, nevertheless. Certain it was that the grand-ducal schloss stood upon the land on which Fritz Müller, several hundred years ago, slew the three wolves. There was the wolf-stone still standing to prove the fact. And certain it was, too, that the land would have passed into the possession of Fritz and his descendants if only he had possessed the rights of nobility; and now, by the very terms of the patent which the Duke had that day signed, not only Heinrich Müller, but all his ancestors in the direct line, were ennobled. It might be argued that this posthumous nobility could not carry absolute rights back with it; but, on the other hand, it was notorious that the very object of ennobling ancestors was that in law they might be held to be the owners of some rights at least which the children could not enjoy unless their ancestors had enjoyed them. Altogether the situation was grave.

Then, if the land belonged to Heinrich, all that was built upon it was certainly his, and if the Margravate had been attached by the Emperor Conrad to the present schloss, the feudal law would certainly vest the Margravate in the present owner of the schloss. On the other hand, however, they felt pretty sure that the grand dukedom, which had been conferred on the present Grand Duke's father by Napoleon I., was probably safe, seeing that it was not a creation of feudal law at all; but what was the value of the title of Grand Duke if everything else were lost?

Then it was that the Grand Duke began to thank heaven that he had a daughter. He sent for her to come to him at once, and before she left him it was

agreed that, if she could induce Heinrich to relinquish all claims upon the property, and the title of the Grand Duke, he might have her hand. Furthermore, for the honor of the family, he should be created a count, and the old and long-disused castle of Hammersdorf should be handed over to him and his bride and their descendants forever.

That very evening Heinrich was closeted once more with the Grand Duke. Documents were drawn up, and signed and sealed; and the next day the little world of Wolfsteinberg was electrified by the news that their fellow-townsman, the rich tailor, had been created Graf von Müller, and was shortly to be married to the only daughter of the Grand Duke. The diplomatic old Prime Minister went about to all his friends, explaining to them that, in the grand-ducal archives, secret instructions had been found in the handwriting of successive Margraves of Wolfsteinberg to the effect that the great deed of Fritz the Miller was never to be forgotten by the family, and that, if ever his lineal descendant and heir should distinguish himself in arms or letters, he was forthwith to be ennobled, and to be married to a princess of the reigning house, seeing that his great ancestor had saved the life of a princess. The old Baron was certainly clever at fiction, if at nothing else.

And so everything was amicably settled, and the rich young tailor had the old castle of Hammersdorf prepared for his bride in the lovely valley near the Rhine. In due course the wedding was celebrated in the grand-ducal schloss by the Prince Archbishop of Mayence with much pomp and ceremony. Great was the interest all through Germany, and among the wedding-presents was a silver casket presented to the bridegroom by the Kaiser of Austria, on which in high relief was a picture of Fritz the Miller clasping the fair Ermentrude to his breast, and brandishing his cleaver in defiance of three galloping wolves.

This amusing account of the marvels of the modern camera was translated for ROMANCE by H. L. B. Porter from the French of Ferdinand Fleury.

INSTANTANEOUS PHOTOGRAPHY.

In a discussion between several learned gentlemen concerning modern inventions and the marvellous appliances of science, James Beaufranc, a great, brown, boyish fellow, with a merrier countenance than is generally considered to be becoming to a professor of mathematics, was asked to tell in his turn what he thought was the most useful discovery of the human mind.

"What! you dare to pretend that the greatest wonders of modern times are steam, explosives, electricity, and I know not what! As if it were a pleasure to travel so fast that you cannot enjoy the scenery on either hand: to speak through the telephone to a person whose face you cannot see; or to have your tooth pulled out, even without pain, by a wad of some mysterious chemical, come from God knows where! In truth, you gentlemen, though you are reputed to be very wise, appear to me very foolish."

The paradoxes of the young professor caused a general smile, but James Beaufranc continued imperturbably:

"My own idea is that inventions are valuable only in direct ratio to the happiness which they procure. That is why I find your railroads odious, your cannon monstrous, your dynamite absurd. And for other reasons I find but one laudable modern discovery, one which is universally beneficial, a science which is also an art."

"And what is it?"

"Photography."

There was a great shout of laughter. Decidedly Beaufranc had not his equal for pleasantry.

However, with astonishing coolness the young professor continued:

"Yes, photography, which does no harm to any one, but, on the contrary, much good; which makes to live again at our fireside, immortal as their memory, the cherished features of relatives long departed; which consoles in the absence of the dearly beloved; and to which, besides, I owe my marriage."

There was a great silence at this point, and intense curiosity was depicted upon the countenances of Beaufranc's hearers.

"I bought," he continued, "as soon as they appeared, one of those instantaneous cameras. It is no larger than an alarm-clock, and perfectly light and portable. You can hide it under your overcoat, under your arm, within your waistcoat, almost anywhere. When you wish, you touch a button, and presto! everything before you is found imprinted upon the film for all eternity.

"How many times have I opposed to the denial of scholars, complaining of the injustice of punishment, a photograph taken at the moment their arms were raised to hurl at my head the paper missile! But I must come to the story of my marriage.

"I was a professor in Amberville College, and I lived in a little apartment on the ground-floor. Opposite my house was the large, ornamented sign of Mr. Pradoux the notary, to-day my father-in-law. Close beside his desk, the window of his library opened opposite mine, and across the very narrow street I could see, as well as in my own room, all that passed in the house of my neighbor. Indeed, from the first day I could see but one thing, his daughter Valentine. She came and went all day long, for she attended to the housekeeping, Mr. Pradoux being a widower. She animated with her cheery smile and her fresh gayety that paper-strewn interior in a way that was truly adorable.

"Pardon this panegyric upon my wife—but she was then in the marvellous brilliancy of eighteen years. Her first appearance was to me a blow from which

my heart never recovered—a blow that only those psychologists deny who have never experienced it.

"Alas! from the first day this insurmountable love seemed to me what it must have seemed to any reasonable being, foolish, senseless, useless, and doomed to perpetual disappointment.

"Mr. Pradoux was rich, very rich, and I had, to offset his money-bags, only thin diplomas, and appointments yet thinner. There I was, shut up alone with my love, silent as in a sanctuary, satisfied only to look with innocent and distant adoration upon the beautiful Miss Valentine.

"One day the audacious idea came to me of instantaneously photographing her, and at least preserving her image. I carried my little machine to the window-sill, and carelessly, in the most casual manner, I photographed my pretty neighbor, at the precise moment when she was embracing her father. At another time I caught her while she watered her flowers at the window.

"In short, within a month I possessed an original gallery, a true museum of my dearly beloved. With her were pictures of a great many people who had spoken with her in her father's library at the moment of my operation; and very often I turned over my precious collection, happy to possess it, but filled at the same time with a terrible sadness.

"One day I did not see Miss Valentine. I learned that she was ill. In the week which followed, another portentous rumor reached me. Mr. Pradoux was, or was going to be, ruined by a banker of doubtful reputation, who had risked and lost a fortune in a bad speculation. It was even said that criminal proceedings were about to be instituted against Mr. Pradoux. The trial would take place at the Civil Tribunal. I hastened to be of the audience. Mr. Pradoux appeared to be very much cast down, but his countenance to my mind expressed innocence and honesty.

"Soon I had heard all of the testimony on both sides. The business could be summed up in a few words. The

banker had deposited a large quantity of valuable papers with Mr. Pradoux, and he pretended that the latter would not return them to him.

"Mr. Pradoux affirmed on the contrary that he had given them from his own hand into the hand of the banker, who had called for them in his library. But Mr. Monquero denied the visit, and there were no witnesses. Miss Valentine was ill, and, even had she been well, her testimony, being prejudiced, would have been illegal.

"The trial was about to close, probably to the condemnation of Mr. Pradoux, when his adversary turned to the public with a triumphant look. Immediately I recognized that head, for had I not seen it often?

"But where? I felt that it was a question of capital importance. Suddenly light shot through my mind. That figure was registered upon one of my numerous instantaneous photographs of my neighbor's library.

"Therefore Mr. Monquero must have been in the notary's library.

"Yes, this visit that he denied, he had made, and the Tribunal ought to know it.

"I leaped to the advocate's desk and briefly told him my story.

"In a few minutes I had reached my home, and returned to the Tribunal, breathless, but waving a paper in my hand.

"I was not deceived, the resemblance was striking. Mr. Pradoux, leaning one hand upon the window-ledge, was holding in the other a bundle of papers toward Mr. Monquero.

"You can easily divine what followed.

"The Tribunal released Mr. Pradoux in a fortnight, and exonerated him from blame; the dishonest banker put the Belgian frontier between himself and justice, and Mr. Pradoux invited that same evening to dinner his providential savior.

"Miss Valentine, still suffering, but more charming than ever in the pallor of convalescence, rushed toward me.

"You have saved the fortune, and, what is far better, the honor of my father," she said, as she extended to me her hand. "Nothing, absolutely nothing, can testify our gratitude."

"But if—" interrupted I, "but if——" and, deciding at once upon my course of action, I drew Mr. Pradoux into his library, where I related to him the secret of the photographs, my love, and my hopes.

"I will abridge. Two months after this interview, Miss Valentine and I were married."

James Beaufranc stopped and shot a look of satisfaction toward his amazed friends.

"Behold!" said he sententiously, "how photography makes marriages!"

"Yes!" cried one, "instantaneously!"

There is a chance to make a very pretty sentiment, in characterizing this anonymous story from the *London World*. Many a Fitzroy vase, unvalued and neglected—but, after all, the sentiment, pretty as it is, is so easily put into shape by any reader that it is almost a pity to voice it beforehand

THE FITZROY VASES.

WHAT I am about to relate is absolutely true. It has never appeared in type before. I shall merely make a necessary change in names and locale, leaving the facts exactly as they were detailed to me by one personally interested in the story.

In a rambling old rectory in the Midlands there had stood for more than forty years two china vases—not specially admired or valued by the owner—dusted by the sacrilegious hands of every chance housemaid, yet, curiously enough, unbroken during that long period of time. There were quantities of china lying about and ranged along the walls, apparently of equal or greater value. The place was a vast china warren—why, no one seemed to know.

At the end of the forty years the Rector, who had a more dignified ecclesiastical title as well, died. Like Mr. Bardell, "he glided almost imperceptibly from the world," and left his china behind him. *Hinc illæ lachrymæ!*

The Rector left two sons, Robert and James Fitzroy. The property was divided pretty equally between the two, except that to Robert, the elder, went the furniture, pictures, plate, and china. Before the final settlement, however, James Fitzroy said to Robert, "I have a fancy for those two vases out of the hall—more for auld lang syne than anything else." To which Robert replied, with generosity more conspicuous than discrimination, "All right; I don't care about them. You may have them with pleasure."

The incident, which seemed to both trivial enough, did not dwell in the minds of either of the brothers. James, who was a barrister by profession and a farmer by preference, took his spoil away. The vases were placed in the drawing-room of his country house, where his wife, partly because her husband from old associations attached value to them, dusted them herself.

One day a lady of their acquaintance called at The Briars. After the usual platitudes about the weather and the dulness of the season, the visitor glanced round the room in search of a new subject. The ineptitude of one's friends sometimes gets worn threadbare under discussion in the country, and violent efforts after novelty have to be resorted to. The errant gaze lighted on the strange vases, and the quest was over.

"Oh, what lovely vases! Where did you get them, Mrs. Fitzroy?"

"They came from my husband's father's. Were they not in the room when you called last, Mrs. Hemming?"

"No, I am sure that they were not. I do admire them tremendously; don't you?" Here the visitor crosses the room to inspect the delicate ware more closely. The pantomime of devotion which follows can be more easily imagined than described.

"I like them very well," replies the hostess unsympathetically; "but I have seen a great many vases that I like better."

The visitor returns to her seat, but cannot keep her eyes and thoughts from the object of her admiration.

A week afterward Mrs. Hemming calls again. This time she is accompanied by Lady Sarah Mordaunt, who is unknown personally to Mrs. Fitzroy, but who is an ardent chinamaniac. Mrs. Hemming introduces her friend. Together they strike becoming, appreciative, and, to the unsympathetic, somewhat ludicrous attitudes before their idol. Mrs. Fitzroy plays second fiddle to her own china. Lady Sarah Mordaunt is even louder in her praises than Mrs. Hemming. Together they insist, unmoved by the passive resistance of their hostess, on

removing the contents of a glass case hitherto filled with bric-a-brac, and installing in its place the two vases. Departing with a solemnity becoming to the occasion, they thus exhort Mrs. Fitzroy: "If you and your husband do not really value this china, why not send it to Messrs. Christie & Manson, and let them sell it to some one who will?"

Lady Sarah Mordaunt, with, indeed, an enthusiasm worthy of the cause, was quite rude about it. The world outside chinamania is, to the true believer, very much what Macedonia was to Athens in the day of Pericles—a barbarism only to be touched with the tongs.

These exhortations sunk deep into the receptive soul of Mrs. Fitzroy, and eventually permeated even the more pachydermatous entity which composed her husband. The barrister communicated with the famous firm of auctioneers. They asked for a description of the china, which was given. Ultimately, by their advice, the vases were sent up to King-st., St. James' Square, to be inspected, and sold for what they would fetch.

"Let us have a little jaunt up to town, my dear," remarked Mr. James Fitzroy to his wife; "if the china is all they say, the vases ought to fetch a ten-pound note each, and that will pay our expenses. We have not had a holiday for a long time." Like John Gilpin, when proposing a similar excursion, Mr. Fitzroy was unaware that the future was big with fate. There the simile breaks down.

Accordingly to town they went, putting up at the Bedford Hotel, in Covent Garden. After a few days spent in the extremely innocent enjoyment in which married men indulge in London, when they have their wives with them, Mr. Fitzroy received a notice from Christie & Manson that his vases would be sold on a certain day the following week, at the end of the sale of Count Mirabeau's china. Count Mirabeau was a name dear to connoisseurs, and even celebrated outside the charmed circle. He was, in fact, a hierophant of the china fetish.

"I should like to see this collection of Count Mirabeau's they talk so much about in the papers," said Mr. James Fitzroy. "I think we will go to the sale."

With this view, when the day arrived, they went prepared to swallow quietly their own (and the vases') comparative insignificance. On their arrival in King street they found the rooms, of course, crowded with gentlemen and dealers. The time fixed for the sale had not yet come.

Making their way with difficulty through the room, Mr. and Mrs. Fitzroy met an acquaintance from the Midland shire in which they lived.

"Hallo, Fitzroy! what are you doing here? I never knew you were a maniac. What brings you to Christie's on a china day?"

"I don't go in for this sort of a thing as a rule, but I thought I should like to see Count Mirabeau's collection. They talk so much about it. Besides, I have a little thing in the sale myself."

The friend did not heed the last part of the remark, but answered the first. "Oh, Count Mirabeau! Yes, that is fine enough, I confess; but it is nothing compared to some china at the further end of the room. You come this way and I will show you." The trio threaded their way to a remote corner of the sale-room, passing as rapidly as might be a great quantity of very handsome china, which was arranged and ticketed ready for the sale. At the end, remote from the door and near the rostrum, under two glass moulds, on a table stood their own two vases.

"There, look at that," remarks the friend complacently, with the gentle patronage of superior knowledge. "That is china if you like—worth any other ten pieces in the room. Quite unique!"

"Hang it!" said Mr. Fitzroy. "I need not have come all this way to see those vases. Why, they are mine!"

"Yours, Fitzroy! I like that! You have turned humorist in your old age. Don't you wish they were, by Jove! You must take care of your husband, Mrs. Fitzroy. He works too hard."

"Thank you for the insinuation, Somerset. I am sane enough to know my own property when I see it. I tell you those vases that you think such a lot of are mine. I sent them to Christie." The tone and the words were too earnest to be mistaken.

By this time the bystanders had heard the colloquy, and had gathered the import of what was passing. The dealers swarmed round Mr. Fitzroy like vultures upon carrion. They took the facts and the "greenness" in at a glance.

"I vill give you vive 'undred pound for those vases." "I vill give you six 'undred pound for those vases." "I vill give you eight 'undred pound for those vases." "I will give you more than any man in England for those vases on the table, sir." Such were the cries which resounded on all hands. Jew and Gentile for once had found a subject on which they could agree. Mr. Fitzroy was perfectly bewildered, and ran considerable risk of being reduced to the condition Somerset had suggested previously. The latter, who was an old hand, came to his rescue.

"Don't be a fool, Fitzroy. If they really are yours, keep a cool head on your shoulders. They tell me telegrams have been on the go all over Europe about those vases to-day. They are worth a mint of money. Don't part to any of these sharks."

On the steps of the hall the barrister would have taken twenty pounds for his chances from that day's sale with cheerful alacrity.

Mrs. Fitzroy was looking very white. The sudden turn affairs had taken was almost too much for her.

"Don't faint, my dear," remarked her husband. The advice was needed. She felt very like it. But woman's buttress, curiosity to see the end, sustained her. If a woman were not curious, she would die more often than she does.

The sale began. Count Mirabeau's collection was sold first. The junior partner was the auctioneer. The Count's china was indeed magnificent, and duly appreciated. The bidding was active and the prices ade-

quate. Nevertheless, throughout there was a restless feeling of impatience. More was coming. The bonne bouche was kept to the last.

There was a pause. Then, amidst loud applause and great excitement, to which it may be imagined the Fitzroys were not wholly insensible, the two vases were placed before Mr. Woods, the auctioneer, in full view of the audience. When silence supervened, Mr. Woods said:

"Gentlemen, we know next to nothing about this china which stands before you, and of which you have just testified your approval. We cannot give you its detailed history. All we know is that these vases have been hidden away in a country rectory in the Midlands for forty years and more. Anything further back seems to be absolutely uncertain. One thing, however, we do know absolutely: the tinting is the real Rose du Barri. We thought there were only five vases in Europe, the finest existing examples of this beautiful ware. We now know there are seven. The sixth and seventh stand before you, gentlemen."

Another round of applause greeted the conclusion of this short speech. The bidding began. Mr. and Mrs. James Fitzroy stood in the corner unnoticed, breathless with suppressed excitement. No one heeded them. They again played second fiddle to their own property.

Five hundred pounds was the first bid for the pair. A cheer emphasized the spirited start. A cool thousand, was, however, soon reached. Then there was a pause, amid silence which could be felt and almost heard. Only three bidders were left. Every one understood that they were gathering up their forces for the final conflict.

"It is against you, my lord," the auctioneer remarked quietly.

The hint was taken, and the bidding began again. "Fifteen hundred guineas." An unanswerable argument. The hammer falls. The crowd cheers. The wealthiest nobleman in England is the purchaser. Mr. James Fitzroy is the wealthier by one thousand five

hundred pounds. Mrs. Fitzroy marks her appreciation of the gravity of the situation and her own good luck in true feminine fashion, by promptly fainting.

It reads like a romance, yet happens to be perfectly true.

. . . . . .

About the same time a girl chances to die of starvation. Nobody need do that in England, as Mr. Scrooge in his palmy days, before the ghosts got tampering with him, would have taken care to point out. But they do, occasionally, all the same. The public resents it very naturally as bad form. One of the weekly papers saw fit to couple the episode of the vases and the death of the girl together, although the two things were quite distinct. The effort was lyrical, and the last couplet ran:

"But she was only common clay,
And these were Rose du Barri."

. . . . . .

A puff of smoke rises up into the air and curls in graceful spiral curves to the ceiling, where it hovers until its identity is lost, owing to the fact of its being joined by other unsubstantial emanations from the same source.

"But you are Robert Fitzroy?" queries the listener, who has been silent for five minutes after the narrator of the story had finished.

"Yes," with another and more vigorous puff of smoke, which may or may not have been expressive of internal emotion. "I gave those vases to my brother."

ROMANCE.

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This touching revelation of a most creditable weakness in a great man, though it is hardly in consonance with our view of the Russian character, is the last sketch written by Ivan Tourgueneff. It was translated for the New York *Tribune*.

THE QUAIL.

I WAS about ten years of age when what I am about to relate occurred.

It was summer time. In those days I lived with my father on a farm in Southern Russia. Around us for a distance of many versts the steppe extended in every direction. No forest, no stream could be found in the neighboring country; only shallow ravines, covered by brushwood and looking like immense green snakes, here and there made their way through the otherwise unbroken surface of the plains. Tiny rivulets flowed at the bottom of these ravines; in places to which well-beaten foot-paths generally led you could see, very near the top of the bank, small springs of limpid water, like tears, issue from the ground, and on their edges in the damp clay the tracks of numberless birds and other small animals. Man and beast alike need fresh, pure water.

My father was passionately fond of hunting. Every moment he could spare from his work—provided the weather was fine—would see him take down his rifle, strap his pouch about his waist, whistle for his old dog Tresor, and start to hunt quail or partridge. Hare he thought little of; fit only, he would say with an air of contempt, to make a hunter run. These and snipes which came in the autumn were all the game found in the neighborhood.

But quails and partridges were quite numerous; especially the latter. In following the banks of the ravines you would encounter at every step little hollows in that dry ground where they love to squat. Old

Tresor would then come to a sudden stop, his tail wagging furiously, and his forehead gathering in wrinkles, while my father, pale with excitement, would cautiously raise the hammer of his gun.

At times, to my great joy, I would be permitted to accompany him. I used to tuck the legs of my trousers into the tops of my boots, hang my little flask over my shoulders, and, so equipped, would imagine myself a true sportsman. Though perspiration might cover me from head to foot, and gravel and dust enter my shoes, I never felt the least fatigued, and never in a single instance allowed myself to drop behind. At each report of the gun, and as soon as the bird fell, I bounded forward with a joyous shout—I felt so happy! The wounded quail might struggle, flap its wings, sometimes on the ground, at other times in Tresor's mouth, its blood flow—I only became enthusiastic; I never felt the least sentiment of pity!

What wouldn't I have given to be able to fire a gun myself, to kill quails and partridges with my own hand! But my father had repeatedly explained to me that I was not to have a gun until I had reached the age of twelve, and that then I was to have a single-barreled gun, and that I would be allowed to shoot larks only. Large numbers of these were found near our house; on sunny days you could see them by the dozens in the clear sky, mounting higher, ever higher, with chirps resembling the tinkling of little bells.

I looked upon them as my future spoil, and aimed at them with a stick which I carried over my shoulder like a gun. It is very easy to get close to them, when they hover with quivering wings perhaps five or six feet above the ground, before suddenly plunging into the grass.

Sometimes, in the distance, on stubble fields or the green prairie, bustards could be seen. "Ah!" I would sigh; "to kill a big bird like that, and then die."

I pointed them out to my father with my finger, but he would invariably answer that the bustard was a very shy bird, which would not permit anybody to get near

it. Once, however, he attempted to steal upon a solitary bustard, thinking that it had been wounded perhaps, and was lagging behind the rest of the flock. He ordered Tresor to keep behind him, and bade me not to stir. Charging his gun with buckshot, he turned to the dog and exclaimed in a low voice: "Back, back." Then, cowering as low as possible, he advanced cautiously upon the bustard. Tresor would not crouch down, but assumed a gait something like that of a bandy-legged person, wagging his tail and holding one of his lips between his teeth. I couldn't keep still any longer, and followed my father and Tresor, crawling carefully all the way. But the bustard wouldn't allow us to get within three hundred yards; it started on a run first, then flapping its wings flew away. Tresor made a bound forward and stared at it. I, too, looked at it—with such a disappointed heart! Couldn't it have stayed just a little longer? We should certainly have killed the bird.

One day I started with my father to go hunting. It was on the eve of St. Peter's Day. At that season of the year the young partridges are still very small, and my father would not shoot any. He therefore entered a patch of oak trees situated on the edge of a rye field, where you were always sure to find quail. As it was rather difficult to cut the grass in this piece of wood, it had been allowed to grow freely, and had attained a great height. Myriads of flowers, vetch, clover, harebell, mouse-ear, and sweet-william, throve there in abundance. Whenever I came to this spot with my sister or the maid-servant, I carried home whole armfuls; but when in the company of my father I did not think of picking flowers. I considered that occupation unbecoming a sportsman.

Suddenly Tresor came to a stop. My father made a signal to me to be cautious. Right in front of Tresor a hen quail rose and flew off. But she flew in a strange manner, turning and tumbling over and over again in the air, and then falling to the ground as if she had been wounded. Tresor made for her as fast as possible

—a thing he never did when the bird flew in its usual manner.

My father could not take aim for fear of hitting the dog. Presently Tresor made a sudden dash, and, before we knew it, he had seized the quail, and brought her to my father. My father took the bird from him and laid it on its back on the palm of his hand. I ran up to him.

"What's the matter?" I cried. "Is she wounded?"

"No," replied my father; "she must, however, have her nest with her little ones close by. She acted as if she were wounded, so that the dog might think he could catch her easily——"

"Why did she do so?"

"In order to divert the dog's attention from her little ones; after which, if she had succeeded, she would have flown away. But this time she missed her little game, and Tresor has caught her."

"Then she is not hit?" I inquired again.

"No—but she won't live—Tresor must have injured her with his teeth."

I stepped nearer to have a better look at the quail. She rested motionless on the palm of my father's hand; her head was drooping and her black eye looked at me sideways. All at once a feeling of pity overcame me. It seemed to me as if the poor little bird regarded me and thought: "Why must I die? Why? Have I not done my duty? I tried to save my little ones, to draw the dog's attention away from them, and here I am a captive! Ah, me! Poor me! This is not just; no, no, it is not just!"

"Papa, perhaps she will not die," I cried, trying to caress the little bird's head.

My father answered:

"She'll die. Look! In another moment, and her legs will stiffen, her body will tremble, and her eyes will close."

Indeed, that's what did happen before long. When her eyes had closed, I began to cry.

"Well, what's the matter?" my father exclaimed almost laughingly.

"I pity her," I replied. "She did her duty and she has been killed. It is not just!"

"She wanted to play a deceitful game," my father answered, "but Tresor was too smart for her."

"Bad dog!" I thought (at that moment I even thought my father himself was not good). There was nothing deceitful in her action. It was the love for her young that prompted her to do it. Because she was forced to dissemble in order to save her brood, it does not follow that Tresor had to seize her.

My father wanted to put the quail in his game-bag, but I begged him to give her to me. I placed her in my two hands and warmed her with my breath, hoping to bring her back to life again; but she did not stir.

"You waste your time," said my father. "You can't revive her. Don't you see how her head is drooping?"

I tenderly raised her head by the bill, but as soon as I let go, it would fall back.

"Do you pity her so much?" asked my father again.

"Who will feed her young?" I replied.

My father looked at me attentively.

"Don't worry about that," he said, "the male bird, the father, will feed them. But listen! There's Tresor pointing again! Perhaps it's the nest! It is."

In fact, among the stalks of some tall grass, two feet in front of Tresor's snout, I perceived four little quails nestled close together and with outstretched necks. They breathed so quickly I thought they were trembling all over. They had already little feathers; only their tails were still very short.

"Papa! Papa!" I cried, "call back the dog; he'll kill them too."

My father recalled Tresor, and prepared to sit down a little way off under a bush to eat some lunch. I remained close by the nest and refused to eat. I pulled from my pocket a white handkerchief upon which I placed the quail. "Look, poor orphaned little ones!

There's your mother! She has sacrificed herself for you." The young birds seemed to breathe more rapidly when I said it, and their little bodies seemed to tremble still more violently.

I went to where my father sat.

"Will you make me a present of this quail?" I asked.

"If it gives you any pleasure, of course. But what are you going to do with her?"

"I am going to bury her."

"Bury her?"

"Yes, there; right close to the nest. Give me your knife so I can dig her a little grave."

"You expect the young to go and pray on the grave, I suppose?" suggested my father in astonishment.

"No," I replied; "but the thought pleases me. She belongs there, close to her nest."

Without adding another word my father looked for his knife and handed it to me. I set to work at once to dig the little hole. I pressed a kiss upon my quail's breast and placed her gently in her grave, and then I filled it with earth. I cut two sticks, and after removing the bark I made a cross by tying them together with some dry blades of grass; and this I placed upon the grave.

We started soon afterward to go home. At each step I turned to look back. The cross was white, and I could see it far off.

That night I had a dream. It seemed to me I was in heaven, and there, perched upon a tiny little cloud, I saw my quail—the very same quail I had buried in the morning, only she was all white, like the cross on her grave. Around her head a halo of gold spread its luster; no doubt, I thought, a reward for what she had suffered for the sake of her children.

Five or six days after, I returned in company with my father to the grave. The cross had become a little more yellow, but had remained in its place. The nest, however, was empty; not a trace of the little ones was left. My father assured me that the male bird had

carried them elsewhere. Indeed, at that very moment, only a few steps from where we stood, the little male flew out of a bush; and my father forbore to fire at him —and I, I said to myself: "No, no; papa is not bad!"

Strange to say, from that day my love for hunting left me completely, and I never even thought of the gun which my father had promised me. Later, it is true, when I had become a man, I took to hunting too, but I never was a true sportsman.

One day I was hunting with a friend of mine. We soon came upon some grouse. The mother bird rose and we fired. She was wounded, but did not fall, and got away with her young. I proposed following them.

"Let us remain here," my friend said. "We'll imitate their cry, and the whole flock will return before long."

My companion knew well how to imitate the call of these birds. We seated ourselves among the bushes, and my friend began his tactics. At first a young grouse answered, then another, and before long the mother herself quite close to us replied in a subdued and soft voice. I raised my head and saw her approach through the grass with all possible speed. Her breast was covered with blood. The instincts of a mother were prompting her; she evidently wished to divert our attention. At that moment I seemed to myself a monster of cruelty. . . . I rose and clapped my hands. The mother flew away, and the young at once became silent. My companion was furious; he looked at me like a madman.

"You have spoiled our entire sport," he said.

But from that day on, to kill, to shed blood, became more and more painful to me.

This true story of the experience of a Nihilist in Russia was written by "Stepniak" for the *Cornhill Magazine* in 1884. No imagination could conceive a more heartrending situation, nor picture a more skilful and fortunate escape.

OLGA MOROSOFF'S ESCAPE.

AN EPISODE OF NIHILISM.

In November, 1879, Olga fell into the hands of the police. It should be explained that, when these succeed in arresting a Nihilist, they always leave in the apartments of the captured person a few men to take into custody any one who may come to see that person. In our language, this is called a trap. Owing to the Russian habit of arranging everything at home and not in the cafés, as in Europe, the Nihilists are often compelled to go to each other's houses, and thus these traps become fatal. In order to diminish the risk, safety signals are generally placed in the windows, and are taken away at the first sound of the police. But, owing to the negligence of the Nihilists themselves, accustomed as they are to danger, and so occupied that they sometimes have not time to eat a mouthful all day long, the absence of these signals is often disregarded, or attributed to some combination of circumstances—the difficulty, or perhaps the topographical impossibility, of placing signals in many apartments in such a manner that they can be seen from a distance. This measure of public security frequently, therefore, does not answer its purpose, and a good half of all the Nihilists who have fallen into the hands of the Government have been caught in these very traps.

A precisely similar misfortune happened to Olga, and the worst of it was it was in the house of Alexander Kviatkovsky, one of the Terrorist leaders, where the police found a perfect magazine of dynamite bombs and similar things, together with a plan of the Winter Pal-

ace, which, after the explosion there, led to his capital conviction. As may readily be believed, the police would regard with anything but favorable eyes every one who came to the house of such a man.

Directly she entered, Olga was immediately seized by two policemen, in order to prevent her from defending herself. She, however, displayed not the slightest desire to do so. She feigned surprise, astonishment, and invented there and then the story that she had come to see some dressmakers (who had, in fact, their names on a door-plate below, and occupied the upper floor) for the purpose of ordering something, but had mistaken the door; that she did not know what they wanted with her, and wished to return to her husband, etc.—the usual subterfuges, to which the police are accustomed to turn a deaf ear. But Olga played her part so well that the *pristav*, or head of the police of the district, was really inclined to believe her. He told her that anyhow, if she did not wish to be immediately taken to prison, she must give her name and conduct him to her own house. Olga gave the first name that came into her mind, which naturally enough was not that under which she was residing in the capital, but as to her place of residence she declared, with every demonstration of profound despair, that she could not, and would not, take him there or say where it was. The *pristav* insisted, and, upon her reiterated refusal, observed to the poor simple thing that her obstinacy was not only prejudicial to her but even useless, as, knowing her name, he would have no difficulty in sending some one to the Adressui Stol, and obtaining her address. Struck by this unanswerable argument, Olga said she would take him to her house.

No sooner had she descended into the street, accompanied by the *pristav* and some of his subalterns, than Olga met a friend, Madame Maria A., who was going to Kviatkovsky's, where a meeting of Terrorists had actually been fixed for that very day. It was to this chance meeting that the Terrorists owed their escape from the very grave danger which threatened them; for the win-

dows of Kviatkovsky's rooms were so placed that it was impossible to see any signals there from the street.

Naturally enough the two friends made no sign to indicate that they were acquainted with each other, but Madame Maria A., on seeing Olga with the police, ran in all haste to inform her friends of the arrest of their companion, about which there could be no doubt.

The first to be warned was Nicholas Morosoff, as the police in a short time would undoubtedly go to his house and make the customary search. Olga felt certain that this was precisely what her friend would do, and therefore her sole object now was to delay her custodians so as to give Morosoff time to "clear" his rooms (that is to say, destroy or take away papers and every thing compromising), and to get away himself. It was this that she was anxious about, for he had been accused by the traitor Goldenberg of having taken part in the mining work connected with the Moscow attempt, and by the Russian law was liable to the penalty of death.

Greatly emboldened by this lucky meeting with her friend, Olga, without saying a word, conducted the police to the Ismailovsky Polk, one of the quarters of the town most remote from the place of her arrest, which was in the Nevsky district. They found the street and the house indicated to them. They entered and summoned the *dvornik* (doorkeeper), who has to be present at every search made. Then came the inevitable explanation. The *dvornik* said that he did not know the lady, and that she did not lodge in that house. Upon hearing this statement Olga covered her face with her hands, and again gave way to despair. She sobbingly admitted that she had deceived them from fear of her husband, who was very harsh, that she had not given her real name and address, and wound up by begging them to let her go home.

"What's the use of all this, madam?" exclaimed the *pristav*. "Don't you see that you are doing yourself harm by these tricks? I'll forgive you this time, because of your inexperience, but take care you don't do

it again, and lead us at once to your house, or otherwise you will repent it." After much hesitation, Olga resolved to obey the injunctions of the *pristav*. She gave her name, and said she lived in one of the lines of the Vasili Ostrov.

It took an hour to reach the place. At last they arrived at the house indicated. Here precisely the same scene with the *dvornik* was repeated. Then the *pristav* lost all patience, and wanted to take her away to prison at once, without making a search in her house. Upon hearing the *pristav's* harsh announcement, Olga flung herself into an arm-chair and had a violent attack of hysterics. They fetched some water and sprinkled her face with it to revive her. When she had somewhat recovered, the *pristav* ordered her to rise and go at once to the prison of the district. Her hysterical attack recommenced. But the *pristav* would stand no more nonsense, and told her to get up, or otherwise he would have her taken away in a cab by main force.

The despair of the poor lady was now at its height. "Listen!" she exclaimed. "I will tell you everything now." And she began the story of her life and marriage. She was the daughter of a rustic, and she named the province and the village. Up to the age of sixteen she remained with her father and looked after the sheep. But one day an engineer, her future husband, who was at work upon a branch line of railway, came to stop in the house. He fell in love with her, took her to town, placed her with his aunt, and had teachers to educate her, as she was illiterate and knew nothing. Then he married her, and they lived very happily together for four years; but he had since become discontented, rough, irritable, and she feared that he loved her no longer; but she loved him as much as ever, as she owed everything to him, and could not be ungrateful. Then she said that he would be dreadfully angry with her, and would perhaps drive her away if she went to the house in charge of the police; that it would be a scandal; that he would think she had stolen something; and so on. All this and much more of the

same kind, with endless details and repetitions, did Olga narrate; interrupting her story from time to time by sighs, exclamations, and tears. She wept in very truth, and her tears fell copiously, as she assured me when she laughingly described this scene to me afterward. I thought at the time that she would have made a very good actress.

The *pristav*, though impatient, continued to listen. He was vexed at the idea of returning with empty hands, and he hoped that this time at all events her story would lead to something. Then, too, he had not the slightest suspicion, and would have taken his oath that the woman he had arrested was a poor, simple creature, who had fallen into his hands without having done anything whatever, as so frequently happens in Russia, where houses are searched on the slightest suspicion. When Olga had finished her story the *pristav* began to console her. He said that her husband would certainly pardon her when he heard her explanation; that the same thing might happen to any one; and so on. Olga resisted for a while, and asked the *pristav* to promise that he would assure her husband she had done nothing wrong; and more to the same effect. The *pristav* promised everything, in order to bring the matter to an end, and this time Olga proceeded toward her real residence. She had gained three hours and a half; for her arrest took place at about 2 o'clock, and she did not reach her own home until about half-past 5. She had no doubt that Morosoff had got away, and after having "cleared" the rooms had thrice as much time as he required for the operation.

Having ascended the stairs, accompanied by the *dvorniks* and the police, she rang the bell. The door opened and the party entered, first the ante-chamber, then the sitting-room. There a terrible surprise awaited her. Morosoff in person was seated at a table, in his dressing-gown, with a pencil in his hand and a pen behind his ear. Olga fell into hysterics. This time they were real, not simulated.

How was it that he had remained in the house? The

lady previously mentioned had not failed to hasten at once and inform Morosoff, whom she found at home with three or four friends. At the announcement of the arrest of Olga they all had but one idea—that of remaining where they were, of arming themselves, and of awaiting her arrival, in order to rescue her by main force. But Morosoff energetically opposed this proposal. He said, and rightly said, that it presented more dangers than advantages, for the police being in numbers and reinforced by the *dvorniks* of the house, who are all a species of police agents of inferior grade, the attempt at the best would result in the liberation of one person at the cost of several others. His view prevailed, and the plan, which was more generous than prudent, was abandoned. The rooms were at once "cleared" with the utmost rapidity, so that the fate of the person arrested, which was sure to be a hard one and was now inevitable, should not be rendered more grievous. When all was ready and they were about to leave, Morosoff staggered his friends by acquainting them with the plan he had thought of. He would remain in the house alone and await the arrival of the police. They thought he had lost his senses; for everybody knew, and no one better than himself, that, with the terrible accusation hanging over his head, if once arrested it would be all over with him. But he said he hoped it would not come to that—nay, he expected to get clear with Olga, and in any case would share her fate. They would escape or perish together. His friends heard him announce this determination with mingled feelings of grief, astonishment, and admiration. Neither entreaties nor remonstrances could shake his determination. He was firm, and remained at home after saying farewell to his friends, who took leave of him as of a man on the point of death.

He had drawn up his plan, which by the suggestion of some mysterious instinct perfectly harmonized with that of Olga, although they had never in any way arranged the matter. He also had determined to feign innocence, and had arranged everything in such a man-

ner as to make it seem as though he were the most peaceful of citizens. As he lived under the false passport of an engineer, he had covered his table with a heap of plans of various dimensions, and, having put on his dressing-gown and slippers, set diligently to work to copy one, while waiting the arrival of his unwelcome guests.

It was in this guise and engaged in this innocent occupation that he was surprised by the police. The scene which followed may easily be imagined. Olga flung her arms round his neck, and poured forth a stream of broken words, exclamations, excuses and complaints of these men who had arrested her because she wished to call upon her milliner. In the midst, however, of these exclamations, she whispered in his ear: "Have you not been warned?"

"Yes," he replied in the same manner, "everything is in order. Don't be alarmed." Meanwhile he played the part of an affectionate husband mortified by this scandal. After a little scolding and then a little consolation, he turned to the *pristav* and asked him for an explanation, as he could not quite understand what had happened from the disconnected words of his wife. The *pristav* politely told the whole story. The engineer appeared greatly surprised and grieved, and could not refrain from somewhat bitterly censuring his wife for her unpardonable imprudence. The *pristav*, who was evidently reassured by the aspect of the husband and of the whole household, declared nevertheless that he must make a search.

"I hope you will excuse me, sir," he added, "but I am obliged to do it; it is my duty."

"I willingly submit to the law," nobly replied the engineer.

Thereupon he pointed to the room, so as to indicate that the *pristav* was free to search it thoroughly, and having lit a candle with his own hand, for at that hour in St. Petersburg it was already dark, he quietly opened the door of the adjoining room, which was his own little place. The search was made. Certainly not a

single scrap of paper was found, written or printed, which smelt of Nihilism.

"By rights, I ought to take the lady to prison," said the *pristav*, when he had finished his search, "especially as her previous behavior was anything but what it ought to have been; but I won't do that. I will simply keep you under arrest here until your passports have been verified. You see, sir," he added, "we police officers are not quite so bad as the Nihilists make us out."

"There are always honest men in every occupation," replied the engineer with a gracious bow. More compliments of the same kind, which I need not repeat, were exchanged between them, and the *pristav* went away with most of his men, well impressed with such a polite and pleasant reception. He left, however, a guard in the kitchen, with strict injunctions not to lose sight of the host and hostess until further orders.

Morosoff and Olga were alone. The first act of the comedy they had improvised had met with complete success. But the storm was far from having blown over. The verification of their passports would show that they were false. The inevitable consequence would be a warrant for their arrest, which might be issued at any moment if the verification were made by means of the telegraph. The sentinel, rigid, motionless, with his sword by his side and his revolver in his belt, was seated in the kitchen, which was at the back, exactly opposite the outer door, so that it was impossible to approach the door without being seen by him. For several hours they racked their brains and discussed, in a low voice, various plans of escape. To free themselves by main force was not to be thought of. No arms had been left in the place, for they had been purposely taken away. Yet without weapons how could they grapple with this big, sturdy fellow, armed as he was? They hoped that, as the hours passed on, he would fall asleep. But this hope was not realized. When, at about half-past ten, Morosoff, under the pretext of going into his little room, which was used for various domestic purposes, passed near the kitchen, he saw the

man still at his post, with his eyes wide open, attentive and vigilant as at first. Yet when Morosoff returned, Olga would have declared that the way was quite clear and that they had nothing to do but to leave, so beaming were his eyes. He had, in fact, found what he wanted—a plan simple and safe. The little room opened into the small corridor which served as a sort of ante-chamber, and its door flanked that of the kitchen. In returning to the sitting-room, Morosoff observed that, when the door of the little room was wide open, it completely shut out the view of the kitchen, and consequently hid from the policeman the outer door, and also that of the sitting-room. It would be possible, therefore, at a given moment, to pass through the ante-chamber without being seen by the sentinel. But this could not be done unless some one came and opened the door of the little room. Neither Olga nor Morosoff could do this, for if, under some pretext, they opened it, they would of course have to leave it open. This would immediately arouse suspicion, and the policeman would run after them and catch them perhaps before they had descended the staircase. Could they trust the landlady? The temptation to do so was great. If she consented to assist them, success might be considered certain. But if she refused! Who could guarantee that, from fear of being punished as an accomplice, she would not go and reveal everything to the police? Of course she did not suspect in the least what kind of people her lodgers were.

Nothing, therefore, was said to her, but they hoped, nevertheless, to have her unconscious assistance, and it was upon this that Morosoff had based his plan. About 11 o'clock she went into the little room, where the pump was placed, to get the water to fill the kitchen cistern for next day's consumption. As the room was very small, she generally left one of the two pails in the corridor, while she filled the other with water, and, of course, was thus obliged to leave the door open. Everything thus depended upon the position in which she placed her pail. An inch or two on one side or the

other would decide their fate; for it was only when the door of the little room was wide open that it shut out the view of the kitchen and concealed the end of the antechamber. If not wide open part of the outer door could be seen. There remained half an hour before the decisive moment, which both employed in preparing for flight. Their wraps were hanging up in the wardrobe in the antechamber. They had, therefore, to put on what they had with them in the sitting-room. Morosoff put on a light summer overcoat. Olga threw over her shoulders a woolen scarf, to protect her somewhat from the cold. In order to deaden as much as possible the sounds of their hasty footsteps, which might arouse the attention of the sentinel in the profound silence of the night, both of them put on their goloshes, which, being elastic, made but little noise. They had to put them on next to their stockings, although it was not particularly agreeable at that season, for they were in their slippers, their shoes having been purposely sent into the kitchen to be cleaned for the following day, in order to remove all suspicion respecting their intentions.

Everything being prepared, they remained in readiness, listening to every sound made by the landlady. At last came the clanging of the empty pails. She went to the little room, threw open the door, and began her work. The moment had arrived. Morosoff cast a hasty glance. Oh, horror! The empty pail scarcely projected beyond the threshold, and the door was at a very acute angle, so that even from the door of the sitting-room where they were part of the interior of the kitchen could be seen. Morosoff turned toward Olga, who was standing behind him, holding her breath, and made an energetic sign in the negative. A few minutes passed, which seemed like hours. The pumping ceased; the pail was full. She was about to place it on the floor. Both stretched their necks and advanced a step, being unable to control the anxiety of their suspense. This time the heavy pail banged against the door and forced it back on its hinges, a stream of water being spilt. The view of the kitchen was completely shut out, but

another disaster had occurred. Overbalanced by the heavy weight, the landlady had come half out into the corridor. "She has seen us," whispered Morosoff, falling back pale as death. "No," replied Olga, excitedly; and she was right. The landlady disappeared into the little room, and a moment afterward recommenced her clattering work.

Without losing a moment, without even turning round, Morosoff gave the signal to his companion by a firm grip of the hand, and both issued forth, hastily passed through the corridor, softly opened the door, and found themselves upon the landing of the staircase. With cautious steps they descended and were in the street, ill-clad but very light of heart. A quarter of an hour afterward they were in a house where they were being anxiously awaited by their friends, who welcomed them with a joy more easy to imagine than to describe.

In their own abode their flight was not discovered until late into the morning, when the landlady came to do the room.

The interior of an American newspaper office is turned inside out before our eyes in the following story, written for ROMANCE by Rhodes MacKnight. The reader will perhaps like old Bentley all the better because he could not become a "successful" reporter, according to the "Journal" standard.

THE GREAT "JOURNAL" BEAT.

It was looked upon as a great newspaper feat at the time. The "Gazette" went so far as to intimate, editorially, that its rival had used some underhand means to accomplish it; that the "Journal" was accessory to the deed, if not absolutely the instigator. But of course that is all nonsense; such unwarranted and scurvy attacks could emanate solely from a paper chagrined at its failure to get the news.

The real author of the beat was Bentley; he, and he alone. The thing was planned by him, the details arranged by him, the whole affair carried out by him without assistance. He it was who wanted his own paper, the "Journal," to beat its rivals. I do not mean to intimate that he committed the deed with that express purpose in view; in fact, I rather incline to the opinion that such was not the case. But sure it is that his intention was to let the "Journal" have the news exclusively. Or why should he have so planned it?

The story is not long in the telling, but it is necessary to start at the beginning—with the very night, in fact, when I first saw Bentley.

It was in the summer of '88, in July, to be explicit, and it was very hot. I was sitting at my desk in the city editor's room, hacking away with a blue pencil at a pile of copy just turned in by the reporters. In the midst of the hurry and bustle that occurs in a newspaper office just before the forms go to press, an old man walked in quietly, diffidently, and stood before me. He was apparently well on toward seventy, with flow-

ing white hair and beard. As our eyes met, he advanced, bowed low, and said:

"Pardon me; the city editor?"

I was about to wave him over to my chief, who sat at the other side of the room, when something in his manner halted me.

"I'm the assistant. Perhaps I'll do as well. What is it?"

He held out a roll of paper.

"I have a little article here which I thought you might be able to use," he said. "Would you oblige me—would it be too much to ask you to look at it?"

"Oh," I said, not very graciously, "you may leave it. We'll look it over and notify you if it's of any use to us."

There must have been a douche in the words.

"But you will look at it?" he asked, hesitating.

"Certainly," I replied. "That's what I'm here for. I haven't time to-night, you know. But you can leave it. H'm—just write your name and address on the first page, and we'll let you know. There's no rush about it, I suppose; it isn't news, is it?"

He was perplexed.

"No-o," he replied slowly; "no, not exactly." Then, taking a pair of steel-rimmed spectacles from his pocket and carefully adjusting them, he wrote out, with exceeding pains, his name and address in the corner of the first page—unrolling the manuscript for the purpose.

"I am sorry to interrupt you again, sir," he ventured presently, "but—but you pay for contributions?" There was a slight quaver in his voice.

"Six dollars a column," I replied, without looking up. "Best rates west of the Mississippi. The 'Gazette' pays only five; the 'News' gives its rates as five, but don't pay anything. That is, you're lucky if you get it."

"Thank you," he said, putting away the spectacles, and placing the roll of manuscript tenderly out of the way of my elbow. Then he added, "Good-night, sir."

I glanced at him as he went out. He was neatly dressed, but his clothes had the shine of wear. He impressed me as a man of some intelligence; he was polite, even courtly, and his bearing was a curious blending of dignity and humility. After tossing his manuscript into a drawer out of the way, in five minutes I had forgotten all about it, and its owner, too.

I never expected to see the man again. The contributors who came to the office with their precious wares were many; those who came a second time were few. It was with some surprise, therefore, that I again beheld him standing before me a few days later. It was early in the afternoon, and I had just dispatched the last of the "Journal" young men upon an assignment.

"Did you have time to read my little article?" he asked, with a propitiatory smile.

I looked at him a moment. There was a palpable attempt at cheerfulness, even levity.

"To tell the truth," I replied, "I haven't quite got around to it yet. We've so much matter submitted, you know, that it takes a little time."

"Yes, yes," he answered, maintaining his studied carelessness, "I know, of course. I was—er—I was just passing, you know, and I thought I'd drop in. Good-day, sir," and he passed out.

Some time in the afternoon I took out the roll of manuscript and untied it, feeling that I was doing a gracious thing to handle rolled manuscript at all. There were a good many thousand words to it, written in a small, neat hand, without blot, erasure, or interlineation. It was an admirable piece of chirography, but in the first twenty lines I saw that it was not a composition suitable for a daily newspaper. There was nothing timely about it; there was no snap or sensation in it; it was not a "story"; therefore, it would not do.

There was something about the old man that attracted me; and I disliked writing the note which he subsequently received. But there was no alternative; it was at least better than sending back the stuff without a

word. We regretted very much the unavailability of the article; of course its rejection cast not the slightest reflection upon its literary merit; of course we were much indebted to him for giving us the opportunity to examine it; and—might he not do better with the magazines? That was a clinching compliment, I thought.

When I placed this note in the envelope with the manuscript I felt that it would end the matter. But several days later a little girl came into the office with another roll, the source of which I immediately suspected. She was not more than nine or ten, and her small face, while pretty, was pinched and pale.

"Do you run the paper, sir?" she asked.

"Well—h'm—no, my child," I answered. "Not exactly. But what is it?"

By way of answer she handed me the roll; then without explanation she made for the door.

The manuscript, from Bentley, as I suspected, was accompanied by a short note apologizing for the writer's again troubling me—"but would I give the MS. sent herewith a kindly consideration?"

The fresh article—fresh only in the sense that I had never before seen it—aroused a more decided impression of unavailability than the first. I had no option but to return it as I had returned its predecessor.

But even a curt second note did not rebuff the old man. At intervals of two or three days the small girl brought in new manuscripts which were as bad, from the newspaper point of view, as those already refused.

"He is a sticker," I reflected; "but a sticker that can't stick the 'Journal.'"

I began to know what the demerits of these articles would be by merely reading a page of each; given the first paragraph, almost always I could imagine the rest unerringly. It was growing to be a farce. At the start Bentley was an annoyance; within a fortnight he had become a bore. He must be sat upon.

One day, accordingly, when the child came in with the usual neatly-tied and terrifying roll, I asked, "Is your name Bentley, too?

"Yes, sir; I'm the granddaughter," she assented primly.

"Then do you tell your grandfather that I'd like to see him at once," I said decisively.

Early the next afternoon I found him awaiting me at the office. His boots were newly polished, his linen was fresh, his shiny clothes had undergone a revivifying brushing, and he carried himself with increased dignity. The reason of all this soon appeared.

"Mr. Bentley, I wanted to see you about this manuscript," I began, taking the last roll from a drawer.

"Yes? I'm glad you liked it," he replied briskly, with a new light in his dim eyes, and a slight flush of the pale cheeks. He threw out his chest still more. "Shall I——"

"I fear you misunderstand me," I interrupted. "I asked you to call because I wanted to explain why we've been unable to avail ourselves of your contributions. We——" But I stopped short when I looked up at him; the pallor had returned. "The main fault in them—if you will permit me the word," I added, "is that they're not timely. Timeliness, you know, is the first requisite in matter intended for publication in daily papers."

He was silent for a moment, his eyes on the roll of manuscript. Then he began, in his old careless way, to make light of the matter; it was not of the slightest consequence, he said. But suddenly he stopped.

"Is there any way, any possible way, in which I could make them more timely?" he inquired, with a sort of eagerness. "I would do anything I could."

"Timeliness is more or less dependent upon what we technically call a nose for news, Mr. Bentley," I replied. "I don't know whether you have that or not."

"And how would it be possible to tell that, sir?"

I paused a moment to think of an evasion—scratching my own newsy nose with his roll of manuscript, which I held. His eyes were upon the precious stuff.

"The only way is to get a situation on the local staff of some paper, and to take regular assignments."

His face once more lighted up. After a moment's

hesitation, he hazarded diffidently: "Is there anything on the 'Journal' I could try?"

I might have foreseen that my words would invite such a query. I did not know what to say. I should be obliged either to refuse him or to give him a trial; and I wished to do neither. Consequently, an awkward pause ensued.

"I'll speak to the city editor about you, Mr. Bentley," I said finally. "There may be an opportunity for you at space-work—although, mind you, I haven't the slightest warrant for raising your hopes."

Then, as I saw he looked decidedly hopeful, I added by way of discouragement, "The work is very hard, Mr. Bentley, and I've no doubt you'd find it distasteful also."

"Oh, I don't mind that," he answered buoyantly. "I've never in my life, I hope, shirked work when it came in the line of duty."

"Another thing; of course your associates will all be—er—youngish sort of men, you know, and do you —would you mind that?"

I did not know how to inform him delicately that he would probably be guyed by some feather-brain on account of his age and appearance.

But he did not see the point. He laughed, and struck a jaunty attitude.

"Oh, I wouldn't mind that in the least," he declared. "I've a good deal of life left in me yet. I'll be able to keep up with the boys for many a year."

I was not exactly sure of this, and intimated that reporters in these days must be "hustlers," to be of any use to a paper. Whether he did not exactly catch my meaning, or whether nothing could deter him, he still persisted.

"Well, Mr. Bentley, call at one o'clock to-morrow," I said at last. "In the meantime I'll see what can be done."

"Very good, sir." He extended one thin hand. "Allow me to thank you for your kindness. I shall never forget it."

In the evening I spoke to Burns, the city editor. He did not remove the cigar from his lips to reply, but grunted what seemed to be consent. So I added the name of Ralph Bentley, Reporter, to the "Journal" pay-roll. In doing so I felt more than ever that I had assumed a grave responsibility.

Ten minutes before one on the following afternoon the old man appeared. In making out the assignments of the various reporters I had been careful to place "Bentley" against one of minor importance. I should do well to feel my way.

"Mr. Bentley, the city editor has consented to give you a trial."

Instantly his face glowed. He thanked me.

"To start with," I continued, "your salary will be fifteen dollars a week. That isn't much, of course, but it's the usual thing at the start. Later on it will doubtless be increased."

"That is quite satisfactory, sir," he replied.

"Your assignment for this afternoon," I went on, glancing at the book before me, "will be at the afternoon session of the police court. Here—draw up that chair and let me instruct you. You will listen to the various cases as they come up, but take notes only of such as you think of importance. Pay no attention to ordinary drunk-and-disorderlies. Try to get what we technically call a story; that is, if you get hold of a story in which there's a sensation—scandal in high-life, pertinent and impertinent personalities, and so on—work it for all it's worth. If you need help, report to the office by telephone."

This was a saving clause, which would permit me to keep in touch with my pupil, and by which I would be enabled to send an experienced man in case of need.

"And most important," I resumed, "try to get a beat. A beat, Mr. Bentley, is the name by which we designate a piece of news that the other papers don't get—an exclusive report, in short. Let me impress it upon you that newspaper readers appreciate, beyond everything else, a spicy story; and newspapers editors, a sensational

beat. If you can possibly get one, on your first day's trial, I can insure you a doubling of your salary. If you can get both, you can come pretty near to owning the paper. They don't come every day, to be sure; but keep your eyes open. Mark me, now: There is one thing worse than failure to get a beat, and that is getting beaten yourself—letting another paper get the beat. By all you hold most dear, never let that happen to you! In journalism, Mr. Bentley, it is considered justifiable homicide to kill another reporter whom you suspect of having exclusive intelligence of moment upon his person—providing, again, you can do so without the news of the killing reaching his office before it does ours."

The old man had listened attentively. I think this idea of journalism must have struck him as peculiar, for in a moment or so he said: "I understand you, sir, to intimate that what is called a beat forms the most valuable piece of journalistic good-fortune——"

"For the man, and the paper, that gets it."

"And that to secure it, or to prevent it upon the part of another, one may make use of almost any means?"

I nodded, with a smile at his awe-struck earnestness.

"Almost," I said. "Such a view may strike you as a little immoral, perhaps; but you must know, to start with, that the press of to-day takes mighty little cognizance of morality. The counting-room says there is no such thing, I believe. We're not in business for our health. Now, some beats are worth thousands of dollars to a paper; those relating to important events, sensations, crimes, and scandals, are of course the most valuable. But all are much sought after; and even if you bring in only a little one, your success is established."

He seemed lost in the intricacies of the position. After a pause he said: "It all seems very strange. I had no idea that newspaper-writing was so—so complex. But I will do my best; and if there's any chance for a beat, you can rely on me, I assure you."

"Another thing upon which I wish to touch," said I,

leaning back and eyeing him sharply, "is the write-up of your news after you get it. You will pardon my being so explicit, but you are, of course, inexperienced in this line of work, and Mr. McCrea, the managing editor, is very strict. Naturally, in the routine work which will fall to you there isn't much chance for a display of any particular ability; but if you get hold of a story—there's your opportunity! Never let mere facts embarrass you. Use your imagination a bit. That's an aphorism. The public likes a vivid display of virile imagination. Therefore, don't get hampered with a tangle of facts. Ground yourself well, then go ahead with your story; make it readable, sensational; slash 'round lively and make things howl; bring in big doses of pathos and humor—in fact, raise the very deuce."

He looked at me as if questioning my sincerity, but saw I that was perfectly serious.

"Very well," he replied; "I'll do my best."

As I was showing him where to get some copy-paper the city editor came in. He eyed the old man quizzically a moment, and when he went out, followed him with his eyes.

"Is that Methusaleh, come back to be interviewed as to why he lived so long?" he inquired carelessly, as he took his seat.

Parenthetically, I never thought Burns's humorous paragraphs worth printing.

"No, that's the new reporter," I answered, with a slight uneasiness. "A very competent man, I believe."

"Yes, he looks like it," he grunted, turning over his letters. "You'd better put him on the church-run." This was the highest flight of Burns's sarcasm.

It was aggravated by the entrance of a reporter from the adjoining room, who had doubtless heard part of my talk with Bentley. This youth stated it as his conviction, arrived at instantly he set eyes on the old man, that the new reporter was a jay.

The time for turning in afternoon copy at the "Journal" office was six o'clock. If I remained at my desk, I should consequently have nearly five hours of sus-

pense. Instead of doing so, therefore, I shortly followed Bentley to the city court.

I arrived in the midst of a hearing, and took a place well back near the wall, whence I could get a good view of the reporters' table. The case, as I presently learned from a fragment of the evidence, was of slight importance; yet Bentley was leaning over, taking copious notes. The reporters of the other papers were idle, and glanced curiously from time to time at the white head and the busy fingers of the "Journal's" new man. Once, one of them leaned across the table and whispered to another. Then they all smiled significantly.

But Bentley did not notice them; and I was consoled by the reflection that he had taken to heart my words about beats. I returned to the office relieved.

About five o'clock the old man came in. He looked pale and tired. Seating himself at a desk in the reporters' room, he wrote steadily for an hour or so, without seeming to mind the noisy young men who came in from time to time.

When he brought in his copy I glanced at it perfunctorily.

"Report at seven-thirty for your evening assignment, Mr. Bentley," I said. When he was gone, I seized the sheets eagerly.

I read them through. About half the matter written so carefully I threw into the waste-basket without a thought. The remainder I re-read. Then, with a blue-pencil, I tried to get the stuff to read as the "Journal" clientage wanted it to read. When I had finished, the half-dozen pages were covered with spider-webs in blue.

"H'm, not so bad," I reflected critically.

Bentley had turned in matter that would have made about half-a-column leaded nonpareil. About thirty lines went to the composing-room; and that was marked "AB"—cabalistic for the department headed "Jottings About Town."

In the evening I sent him to report a small private concert.

"Say all the nice things you can about it," I instructed.

"The host is a large advertiser, and if you don't make it eulogistic, we'll be hearing from the counting-room. Dish up the ladies' costumes in good style, and compare the soprano to Patti. Give everybody a little the best of it, and don't forget to slur the alleged musical talent of the effete East—or something to that effect. 'Alleged' and 'effete,' by the way, are still in the 'Journal's' vocabulary."

The concert was to be given at a house some distance from the office, and in a locality which there was no means of reaching except on foot. It was late when the old man got back, and he was evidently exhausted. But he came in to give me a glowing account of the affair before sitting down to his write-up. He was childish in his enthusiasm.

"You can make about a stick of it, Mr. Bentley," I said. "We've had a rush of telegraphic, and everything's to be bitten off."

From the injured way in which he looked at me he must have contemplated not less than a column.

At midnight, happening to pass through the reporters' room, I saw him sitting at his desk, apparently waiting in suspense. He had turned in his copy an hour before.

"You might have gone long ago, Mr. Bentley," I said. "Your last copy was '30' for you. You can always go home just as soon as you care to after that."

"But the—the proof, sir."

I did not at first understand. Then, all at once, the reason of his suppressed excitement came to me; he was waiting to polish his stuff before it should go into the irrevocable stereotype.

"Oh, the proof? Well, that's all attended to upstairs. No proof ever comes down to the local-room unless it's a special article."

He was crestfallen; and went out in silence.

The next day he was awaiting my arrival in a state of great perturbation.

"Excuse me, sir," he exclaimed, bursting in from the reporters' room with the morning's "Journal" outspread in his hand—"Excuse me, sir, but I should have

seen the proof last night. Some of my articles must have been lost—they are not half here! And what *is* here is so changed that I can hardly recognize it! Can it be possible that the printers can't read my writing? I try to write very plainly. And do they leave out matter they can't read?

"Really, Mr. Bentley," I replied, endeavoring to escape his eager gaze, "it very often happens that a great deal of matter has to be boiled down. Contrary to the general impression of the public, an editor is always in a quandary what to leave out, not what to 'fill up' with. I'm sorry your stuff was mutilated" (he winced at the word "stuff," generic for newspaper matter), "but I'm convinced it met a common fate. Indeed," I added, glancing at the "Journal" before me, "I find that most of the local was condensed, and a large part of it killed—that is, thrown away, left out altogether, you know."

It was evident that he was bitterly disappointed. Doubtless he had been up at daylight to get a paper fresh from the press. When he took his assignment for the afternoon, he was crushed. Again I impressed upon him the great honor attaching to a beat, and the desirability of a story.

But he brought in neither beat nor story. His matter, viewed in the light of the modern newspaper-reader's taste, was lifeless; it was very bad.

It soon became a question as to how far I could lend the old man assistance. Already I began to find it necessary to spend additional time at the office. Feeling responsible for him and for his work, the constant watch over him was wearing and inconvenient. As the managing editor, no less than the city editor, was a man of moods, I was fearful lest he discover in Bentley's copy cause for complaint; which was, with him, tantamount to dismissal.

Toward the latter part of November there came a time when I was obliged to absent myself from the office, from the city even, for a day and a night. Until now I had been able to exert a saving espionage.

One of the reporters was to fill my place, and to him I confided my fears, with a request that he look out for the old man and prevent his getting into hot water. This he promised to do.

When I returned, however, I found a very pretty row upon the eve of development. I had not been in the office five minutes before the managing editor came to me.

"Look here!" he cried, waving the morning's paper furiously. "Who in thunder wrote this stuff? Who's the ass allowed it to pass?" There was a white circle about his mouth.

"What, sir?" I inquired, with a presentiment.

"This!" he howled, pointing to a short article on the local page. "Whoever's the driveling idiot wrote that stuff, fire him on the spot! I won't have such a man on the paper. It's intolerable!"

I glanced at a paragraph and detected Bentley's style. Evidently his time was come. I did not know how to shield him.

"Mr. Jackson took my place last night——," I began.

The managing editor did not wait to hear more.

"Jackson!" he cried, entering the reporters' room—"Jackson, did you edit this rot, sir?"

There was an ominous silence. Then, "I did, sir," came Jackson's voice.

"You did, eh? And will you kindly give me the name of the idiot who wrote it?"

Now it was all up with Bentley. I was very sorry.

"The name of the idiot who wrote it," came Jackson's voice again in calm tones, "is Jackson."

A silence followed. I pictured the managing editor striving to back down with dignity. There was no better reporter on the paper than Jackson.

"H'm, very strange, Mr. Jackson. I never knew you to be guilty of such rot before. I hope it will never occur again, Mr. Jackson."

And in a moment more he had made a graceful retreat, still muttering.

This escape was contributive to a feeling of temporary

safety for Bentley; but all the reporters were not Jacksons, and I felt that it was but a lull before the storm that was bound to come. And it came but a week or so afterward.

It was a cold, blustery night. Thus far Bentley had appeared at the office without an overcoat.

"My blood's warm if I *am* old," he would say; and there was a stereotyped fairy-tale about a fur garment he had at home, the which, according to his story, must have been built for royalty. He said it was too warm to wear. I regarded it as mythical. When he came in shortly after seven o'clock, he seemed chilled, and I tried to get him to go home. But he was on the police-run that night, and refused.

The old man had come to be sub-police-reporter. His "chief" was a stripling of convivial habits, in high favor with the managing editor because of his ability to put plenty of red-fire into his reports. This night the "chief," so I learned, was distributing his red-fire about town; consequently Bentley was the sole representative of the "Journal" at police headquarters.

He did not leave the office for the station, however, until near midnight. He remained there until three o'clock, his usual time, and then reported by telephone that he had no copy to turn in. When the paper went to press, Bentley was beaten.

Among my duties when I first went to the office in the morning was the comparison of the local columns of the "Journal" with those of our contemporaries, to see what, if any, items of news we had missed, and what we had that the others had not. This was, ordinarily, an easy task; most of the reporters "syndicated," or exchanged their news, thus dividing labor and preventing beats. It was only in Bentley's case that I ever felt anxiety for the prestige of the "Journal"—for I knew that he was in a measure ostracised in the guild, and that he never made exchanges.

On this particular morning I picked up the "Gazette" first, and was startled to find upon the first page a two-column account of a sensational murder, with cuts and

a diagram. The "News" contented itself with a column, with an artistic scare-head in black type. I hastily referred to the "Journal."

There was not a line of it. I scanned the columns narrowly, hoping to find something somewhere—not pausing to reflect that, as the old man had reported nothing the previous night and had turned in no copy, there could be no mention of the crime.

It was the worst beat the "Journal" had ever suffered.

None of the editors had yet arrived. I waited for Bentley. There was nothing to do but to discharge him on the spot; that at least would save him from the abuse of the managing editor.

In the course of a half-hour the old man came in. He smiled cheerfully, and said good-morning; but he saw at the second glance that something serious was the matter. He paused.

"Mr. Bentley, do you know that there was a murder on your run last night?" I asked.

He changed color, and fright came into the blear old eyes.

"You have no report of it," I continued. "How does that come? The other papers have made a justifiable spread of it."

Still he did not answer; he was evidently trying to grasp the enormity of the situation.

"The long and short of the matter is, Mr. Bentley, there's no course left to me but to ask you to resign from the staff. This is for your defense as much as anything else."

He opened his mouth as if to speak, but no words came for a minute or so.

"Have I been beaten?" he asked at last, awe-struck.

"Beaten, and very badly beaten," I answered. "How did it happen? Perhaps there's some excuse——"

He turned abstractedly, and slowly started for the door. He seemed to have aged five years in five minutes.

I started after him, but he made a gesture to restrain me and, without raising his eyes, went down the stairway. He seemed hard-hit.

I immediately assigned Jackson to inquire into the cause of his downfall. It was not a difficult matter; the reporters of the opposition sheets were exuberantly loquacious over the success of the trick they had played upon him.

They had, it turned out, entered into a conspiracy against the old man shortly after his coming on the "Journal." They had guyed him ceaselessly; and with a purpose. They pretended friendship, however, and would give him tips on news that was bogus—"fakes," as they are called in newspaperdom. Day after day he was sent on long journeys after apocryphal sensations; and day after day he was just as ready to follow the false scent. He had a mortal terror of being beaten.

On the night of the murder these wide-awake and astute reporters had come together and deliberated upon a plan by which the old man was to be kept away from the scene of the crime. They told him of it—it would have been as useless as it was impossible to conceal the mere fact—but they embellished the story to such a degree that even he, simple as he was, would not believe them.

The police officials had never been very friendly with the "Journal" since an exposure of certain scandals in the department some time before; but they somehow conceived it to be their duty to tell him that a murder had been really committed, and that the murderer was locked in a cell not fifty feet away. But they, too, had shown a disposition to guy him upon more than one occasion; "Wolf!" had been dinned into his ear so persistently that he was at last growing deaf to the cry.

"All right, all right, boys," he said pleasantly. "Have your fun, boys. I know there's been a murder committed—why, of course! Why, murders are occurring all the time! But it's pretty cool out to-night, boys," he added, with a knowing wink—"it's pretty cool. So I think I'll stay by the stove here and keep comfortable."

And the boys took good care that he did. They brought the biggest armchair in the station, and put it

by the red-hot stove for him to sit in. Then, in relays, they listened to his stories. He was in good-humor that night; he exulted that he was at last getting to be one of them; never before had they been so complaisant.

That is how Bentley was beaten.

As he did not appear at the office within the next few days, I sent a man in search of him. His lodgings were found vacant. He and the child had disappeared without leaving trace. As he had not drawn the balance due him at the cashier's desk, however, I felt sure he would be back. In the meantime I instructed all the reporters to keep a sharp lookout.

But the days passed into weeks, and still there was no word. He had disappeared as quietly and completely as if he had died. His name in the office grew to be merely a tradition.

Some time after midnight one morning in the early part of February, I sat at my desk idle. Having sent to the composing-room the last batch of copy turned in, I had lighted a pipe, and was leaning back in a reverie. The city editor and all the reporters save the two on the police-run had gone home, and I was alone. Outside a blizzard was howling.

Presently I was conscious of the door opening. This did not disturb me, however, and it was only when I caught sight, through the intervening cloud of tobacco-smoke, of a figure in the aperture, that I started. It was a very small figure, bundled in an old gray shawl, and surmounted by a little white disc that might be taken for a child's face.

I looked in astonishment for a moment, then, dropping my feet from the desk, started up.

"Hello!" I exclaimed. "What do *you* want?"

At this challenge the figure advanced timidly, and I recognized in the small, pinched features those of Bentley's grandchild.

"Please, sir," she said in a piping little voice, "is this the 'sistant editor?"

"It is, my child," I replied. "What brings you to me at this time of night?"

She extracted with much difficulty a roll of paper and an envelope from beneath her shawl, but held back uncertainly.

"Here—here is something from grandfather. He told me to be sure and give it only to the 'sistant editor. You're the 'sistant editor?—*sure?*"

"H'm!" I exclaimed, looking at her sharply, "I don't see but that the old man might find something better to do than to send you out such a night as this with a message. H'm—yes, my child, I'm the 'sistant editor, sure."

As I fingered the envelope a moment before opening it, the child's eyes wandered about the room; then, coming back, she cried, "Please, sir, he said it was in a hurry."

"Yes, I dare say," I muttered, still looking at her. Then I tore open the letter.

It was written in his usual precise and careful manner. I have it before me now; it reads as follows:

"THE ASSISTANT CITY EDITOR
"The Journal."

"DEAR SIR:—The accompanying MS. will explain more fully than I can possibly do, with the space and time at my command, exactly what I desire to convey. I have gone over it carefully, and I hope it will not need much editing. This will not only save you trouble, but will expedite its setting-up in type (if you care to use it), which is of course a consideration at this time of night. I have left a hiatus at one part of the article near the end which you can fill in before the "Journal" goes to press by sending to my lodgings, at the subjoined address, in about an hour. I shall by that time have prepared for you the most complete details possible. In conclusion I beg to state that this will be *exclusive* to the "Journal." I have so timed it that none of the other papers can get the information.

I have understood from you that exclusive news is of value, even though unimportant. I trust that this will prove so, and that you will allow me as much for it as possible. I am, dear sir,

"Your grateful and obedient servant,
"RALPH BENTLEY.

"No. 1607 Main St."

Nonplused, I opened the roll of manuscript. It consisted of a dozen pages or more. Noting that the old man was as verbose as ever, I caught the first line:

"At 1:30 this morning Ralph Bentley, an old journalist——"

I paused to smile at the pride with which the old man clung to the name of journalist. But what was this? Surely——

In an instant I had read the two following lines and grasped the situation. News-instinct asserted itself. Rushing to the pneumatic-tube connecting with the composing-room, I crammed in the manuscript; then, catching at the annunciator, I yelled wildly to the foreman: "Get this up at once! Put twenty men on it! Double-lead! Hold the first page form!"

Everything was clear now. I seized the small girl and seated her in my chair. Then, jumping into an overcoat, I launched into the entry and down the stairway. I even forgot to report to the autocrat of the eleventh hour, the night-editor.

"Main Street—1607," I repeated time and again as I plowed through the deep snow. "If it isn't too late! If it is too late?"

In ten minutes I reached the house. It was a tenement, dark, dirty, squalid. The door was open; I rushed in and groped up the narrow stairway.

Flight after flight I mounted, not knowing where to stop. But suddenly I caught sight of a crack of light beneath a door. I turned the knob and entered.

The room was lighted by a single sputtering lamp. All was wretchedness and misery. By a dilapidated table an old man was sitting in an arm-chair. His face was emaciated and drawn; his chin rested upon his breast, and his white hair hung straggling. He was quite motionless; he seemed to be asleep.

One thin hand lay upon the edge of the table, and in it was held the stump of a pencil; beside him were a cheap, open-faced watch and an overturned empty vial. Several loose scraps of paper, filled with close writing, were scattered about.

I drew near and touched the man upon the wrist. The flesh was warm; but the pulse was stopped.

I gathered the sheets of paper. Each was marked with the time of writing; they noted every quarter hour since midnight. The two latest were these:

"1:00 A.M.—Strange to say, the action of the drug is painless; I suffer nothing. But I note a drowsiness.

"1:15 A.M.—There seems to be a decided tendency to induce sleep; I can with difficulty keep my eyes open. This seems to be the sole action, the exclusive——"

The last word ended abruptly; the concluding letters sprawled.

I looked at the watch; it was twenty minutes to two. His last word upon earth was the stumbling-block of his career.

The article which appeared in the "Journal" that morning made, as is well known, a sensation throughout the country. It was in reality the story of a man, written mostly by his own hand, upon the brink of eternity. No newspaper enterprise could exceed that.

As I have said, the "Gazette" intimated that we were accessory to the deed. Of course, the reading public knows how to take the utterances of such a sheet. The foregoing statement of the truth in the case proves the malicious mendacity of the charge.

Bentley must really have had the news-instinct, for even the managing editor was disposed to remember him as a man of ideas. In fact, after reading the article on the eventful morning—four columns of it—he came to me with a face wreathed in a satisfied smile.

"Great stuff, that!" he ejaculated; "it's worth a thousand dollars to the paper." Then he added, as if in reflection, "And if that driveling old idiot had written that way to start with, he might have been here yet."

These words seemed to have a familiar ring to me. Perhaps it was because I happened to glance out of the window at that moment and saw Jackson. And with the young man was the small girl. They were going in the direction of his home.

The following Siberian story has been written especially for the Russian number of ROMANCE by Emma Rebekah Rice. The author says that it is largely true, and adds, "I am personally acquainted with the exile whose sufferings I have attempted to portray."

ALBA.

A SIBERIAN ROMANCE.

A SWIRL of snow from the mountain-side blinded the eyes of the convicts, and they wearily begged to be allowed to rest, but were told roughly to push on. Ragged and worn, the poor women, who had left home and country to follow their exiled husbands, hugged puny, crying babes to their chilled bosoms, and dragged on resolutely. A pitiful sight, truly! Men and women, many of them reared in luxury, were now forced to march, day after day, in the most inclement weather, with scant clothing, and only the poorest food—a black bread made from the sweepings of mills. Even pebbles and other refuse formed the greater part of the ingredients. With this bread they were allowed a cupful of water. That was all!

One of the convicts, a lad of seventeen, whose handsome face was smirched with blood from a wound on his broad forehead—caused by a blow from the fist of one of the guards—leaned wearily on the "varnak" on his left, to whom he was chained. The chain depending from his right hand, and attached to his foot, seemed unusually heavy, for he was weak from loss of blood, but a kick from the guard nearest him forced him to make a desperate effort to push on. His glossy black hair fell in matted locks over his brow. Doubtless his rank had induced the authorities to show him some marks of favor, for he was more warmly clad than his fellow-convicts, and his head had not been shaven. His face gleamed pale in the sun's rays, but it aroused no pity in the hearts of the inhuman guards.

Ivan Smoloff, the youngest convict in this detachment, was a descendant of the royal family of Poland, now under the stern despotism of Russia. He had attempted, with a small band of followers, to defend his country against the Russian forces, but the courage of his countrymen soon weakened, and after the burning of Warsaw, they gave up all hope. The Emperor, fearing another outbreak from this fiery young nobleman, ordered his arrest, and his exile to Siberia. Hearing of this, young Smoloff escaped to Germany, wandering over the Continent for eight weary weeks, only to be captured at last, and exiled. No farewell word with mother, sisters, or sweetheart; no last look at his old home. Hurried off like a common criminal—for defending his country!

"I cannot go further."

These words force themselves to his lips, and he sinks down, dragging his comrade with him. The guards swear at him, kick him, and finally order him to be stripped and beaten. The women shriek with terror, and cover their eyes, but the sounds of the lash ring in their ears, and long after the tortured youth's lips cease to move, they can hear his piteous cries. At last, the quivering flesh is hastily covered with the coarse clothing, and he is chained again, and told to move on.

"You have a knife on your watch-chain; sever the veins in your wrist, and put an end to your sufferings," whispers the convict on his right.

"I cannot," he answers feebly. "I cannot take my own life."

"Better to be dead than suffer this living death! Give me the knife, I will soon put an end to *my* misery."

Smoloff detaches the tiny knife and gives it to the half-maddened creature, who surreptitiously severs an artery in his wrist, and bravely bears up, until forced to fall from exhaustion. The order is given to fire, and all is over. Another convict is chained to Smoloff, and they move on.

Ivan Smoloff envied the dead "varnak," and silently

prayed for death. It was well-nigh impossible to add "If it be Thy will." There was no escape but by death. He had thought of many ways. Even if he could elude the vigilance of the guards, he dared not hope to get out of the country, for the natives were paid three roubles a head for every "varnak."

At Tiumen the convicts were crowded into a barge, and carried across the Obi. As they neared Tomolsk, Smoloff was suffering excruciating pain, and in a frenzied moment twisted the chain which bound him to the next "varnak," and ran a few paces. The cold air blew his hair from his forehead, and sent the young blood coursing through his body. He was free; if only for one moment! Running with all the strength he could command, he strained his ear to catch the order to fire.

"One, two, three—fire!" Six shots rang out on the wintry air. Then three more were despatched at the prostrate body. One guard went up and kicked the stiffening form outlined on the snow. "Right about! March!" and they were gone.

Night fell and the stars came out, one by one, and blinked at the prostrate figure lying so still and cold, with the life-blood crimsoning the snow, and then beckoned the moon to see the pitiful sight.

. . . . . .

Alba Senref, Princess of Arnak, was considered proud and cold by strangers, but they little knew the tenderness of the young Princess's heart. Pledged from childhood to Ivan Smoloff, only son of the royal house of Poland, she had lavished all her young love on her future lord. When the news of his banishment reached her, she did not faint as his mother did. They were at a brilliant ball. The order was immediately given to drive home. Then, with pale lips and white, drawn face, Alba sat down beside her fire, and tried to devise some means of escape for her lover. All night long she paced her room, thinking, thinking, thinking! She *must* do something! Six o'clock struck, and still no plan was made by which she could help him. Sinking on her knees, she prayed for help. The servant, enter-

ing an hour later, found her asleep. She seemed dazed when awakened; then she said:

"Tell my maid I wish to see her."

When the maid came, she ordered her wraps brought.

"But your ladyship will change her dress?"

No, there was no time to lose. Already much had been wasted. Hastily slipping the fur mantle over her ball-dress, which she had not yet removed, Alba filled her purse with money, and, bidding the maid tell no one where she had gone, she left the house. Making her way alone to St. Petersburg, regardless of impudent glances from travelers, she thought only of Ivan, who was going farther from her every moment.

It was a dull, cold morning when she reached the city. Snow was falling in great flakes. The Princess drove to the palace, but was refused admission when she told her errand, as they compelled her to do. For hours she wandered aimlessly through the streets, attracting much attention by her rich attire. At last, weary and heartsick, she entered a church to say a prayer for her hapless lover. As she left the edifice, she was startled by the tramp of soldiers. It was the Emperor's escort. They were passing up the street in the direction of the palace, the Emperor bowing right and left to the crowds of people on the sidewalks. Pushing through the crowd, she reached his carriage, and implored him to save her lover. He scarcely heard her, and, turning to the soldiers, demanded the cause of the disturbance. They rudely forced her back, and the carriage moved on slowly. But she was not to be repulsed without another effort, and again making her way to the side of the carriage, she repeated her earnest appeal. The Emperor requested the soldiers to bring the maiden closer. With downcast eyes, and cheeks flushing hotly, she told of her love for the exiled nobleman, and again implored His Excellency to pardon him.

"Never will I pardon that rash boy. Go to your lover, and starve with him in the mines."

The royal party moved on, the soldiers jostling her

roughly as they passed. She stood but a moment gazing after them with horror-stricken eyes. Go to him? Yes, she would, and stay by his side.

The train seemed to drag along, but at last she reached Moscow. Determined not to leave a stone unturned, she called on the Metropolitan of Moscow. As His Eminence appeared, attired in a brown moiré-antique robe glittering with jewels, and wearing the white crape hat of a Metropolitan, with diamond cross in front, she forgot her rank, and, falling on her knees at his feet, she kissed the hem of his robe. In passionate tones she begged him to use his influence with the Emperor to have her lover pardoned.

"My child, it is utterly impossible. If it were any one but Smoloff, there might be hope, but I can give you none. The Emperor will never pardon him."

He could but pity her as she left the room with a dazed look on her sweet face. She must go to her lover. The kind old man procured a passport for her, and she was enabled to cross the border. How slowly the train crept! She sat with pale face pressed against the window, watching the snow-capped mountains. After crossing the Obi at daybreak, she was compelled to walk for miles through the blinding snow, often falling on the rough stones, but bravely trying to keep up her courage for Ivan's sake. Gusts of snow blew in her face, stinging like lashes, and sometimes the wind forced her back, and she stood still. Her clothes were tattered and soiled when she reached Tobolsk. Here she inquired how long it had been since the convicts had passed.

"Three days ago," the station-guard answered.

"Was—Ivan Smoloff with them?" she asked.

"No, he died just before they reached here. He was shot." "Shot!" How the word rang in her ears! How strange everything looked! The gloomy station, the grinning, evil faces of the guards, as they leered at her. She noticed even the cut of their whiskers, and the dirty bulletin on the wall, announcing the number of convicts that had passed there that year. One of the

guards attempted to kiss her, but with fiercely gleaming eyes she pushed him roughly aside, and bounded like a deer out of the door. She forgot her sufferings. Only to get away from those cruel men, to get beyond reach of their jeers and cruel words! "He is dead," she murmured to herself again and again.

For days she retraced her steps, scarcely knowing where she was going. Sometimes rough men stared at her, but the look of absolute misery in her face served as an armor to protect her, for they only stared and passed on. Once a Tartar man, who looked at her with his kindly black eyes, thinking she was but a child, picked her up in his arms and carried her a long distance. They are very strong, those Tartars, who inhabit this part of Siberia. She could not understand his language, but knew he was trying to speak kindly to her. His swarthy skin, black hair, and high cheek-bones contrasted oddly with her pale face and sun-kissed hair. He doffed his small embroidered skull-cap as he left her at the door of his cabin, and shook his head when she slipped some roubles into his hand.

It was night when she reached Tiumen, and found shelter in a miserable inn. As she sat near the fire in the smoky room, she attracted the attention of an old man, who addressed her in Polish.

"Are you in trouble?" he asked. She was such a child, in spite of the care in her face!

"Yes," she replied wearily.

"I am a pardoned exile from Obdorsk. I was sent there for drunkenness. I have suffered, too."

His worn, attenuated frame and sunken eyes seemed to echo his words.

"Did you ever see any of the political exiles?" she asked eagerly.

"Yes. I met some at Tobolsk. From there they go to the Trans-Baikal District."

"How long were you there?" She searched his face with her restless eyes to see if she could read there any sign of his having seen her lover.

"Five years." He wondered that she expressed no

sorrow. It was a long time to spend in that God-forsaken country. But she was saying to herself, "I might have known he had never seen Ivan." Still, something prompted her to tell him. Her heart was aching for some one to advise her. Merely telling our troubles sometimes lightens them.

"I had a lover who was exiled. So handsome and brave. But he was shot near Tobolsk."

"Near Tobolsk? How long ago?"

"Six days."

"Was he dark, with eyes like a Tartar?"

"Yes. His eyes were like midnight skies, with twinkling stars shining through." She seems paralyzed from cold and fatigue, and wonders vaguely how he knows that Ivan's eyes were dark. Is he sane? What does he mean? He is saying that he has seen Ivan! It was only three days ago! Mother of God, is it true? No, she must be dreaming!

"Your lover is living," he repeats. "I saw him at Berezov three days ago. He was trying to reach the coast, expecting to take a steamer for America."

It is long before he can make her understand, but he tells her again and again. She starts hastily to her feet.

"I will go to him," she whispers, and although he insists that she must wait until morning, she shakes her head. He gives her some advice as to the route, and goes many versts with her, in spite of his feebleness. He can scarcely keep up with her. She seems to have acquired new energy, and almost runs. At daybreak they find a boatman, who rows her some distance, the old man leaving her at the river-bank. "God speed you!" he said, but she thinks only of reaching Ivan, and scarcely looks at the pathetic figure waving his tattered hat at her from the shore. Her hands were clasped in her lap. Something like a smile hovered round her mouth. Once when they were very near the shore, some women came down to the water's edge, with some red-eyed children. They peered at her curiously, and one of them tossed a piece of bread to her;

they thought she was a beggar, her clothes were so ragged, and her golden hair was so rough.

She dares not inquire for Ivan at Berezov, but silently searches for him. She feels satisfied at last that he has left the village, and finding a boatman to take her to Obdorsk, gives him more gold than he has seen for many a day. How her head throbs, and the trees seem to be dancing before her eyes. Strange to say, they are very kind to her at the quiet Obdorsk inn—she seeks the most unpretentious one. They nurse her with rough tenderness for days. She talks incessantly of Ivan, but her language is strange to them, and they do not understand. In her delirium she rises from her bed and wanders along the coast, calling feebly for Ivan, sinking down in the sand at last from weakness. When she awakens, she finds Ivan's arms around her.

"Alba, what are you doing here?"

She tells him how she has searched for him.

"And you did this for me! My darling! How can I love you enough! Off there with the convicts I thought of you many times, and longed for one love-look from your blue eyes, but I never expected to see them again. And lying in the snow, when they left me for dead, I, too, thought for a time that death was very near, and I should never again feel your kiss on my lips."

Then he told her how after the train had left him he had revived, as it would seem by a miracle, and had dragged himself to a hut, where he was nursed until he was able to keep on. Even now his wounds were not entirely healed.

The ships passing looked like great white birds in the distance. One stopped. It was only a freight-ship going to Alaska, but they kindly allowed the fugitives to board her, and as they steamed away from the country that they feared and hated, they felt a load lifted from their weary, burdened hearts.

It was not until long afterward, in their peaceful American home, that Alba heard the full story of Ivan's terrible sufferings in reaching Obdorsk.

To Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett must be awarded the palm for introducing real children into literature, as she does most gracefully and pathetically in the following powerful story. A wise essayist in a recent number of a famous magazine attempts to prove that mawkish sentimentalism usually attends the advent of child-characters into fiction; but Mrs. Burnett's child-characters are never tiresome nor unnatural. Of "The Captain's Youngest," she writes in a private letter: "He was a real child. I never saw him, but I heard of him from a young lady who kept the private school to which he and his sister went. I think I shall write more of him some day. There is a great deal more. . . . He was such a little thoroughbred, that boy! I shall always love him. The old soldier-servant was a real character."

THE CAPTAIN'S YOUNGEST.

I've seen many a young gentleman in my day, through being a military man, and living among what you might call "swells"; but I never saw a young gentleman as could hold a candle to my young master, Lionel, him that we called "The Captain's Youngest." No, not as were fit to black his boots, for the matter of that. And I knew him, too, from the time he were a young gentleman in long clothes, being carried about in his ayah's arms; and many's the time, too, that I've carried him myself, and been proud to do it.

You see, I knew his father, Capt. Dalgetty, of the 57th, in his best days, when he first came out to India, with his regiment; a fine, dashing young fellow, as was a favorite with everybody. After a while he married, and married a belle; and he and his wife were as pretty a couple as you need see. By-and-bye, Miss Rose was born, and then the other children; and last of all, when Miss Rose was about eight years old, my own young master.

When the family began to grow up, the regiment was ordered back to England; and I came back with them, you see. The captain was not rich, and as the family expenses got bigger, year by year, money got

scarcer with him, and they couldn't live as they did before; and so, somehow, I think it was because I liked the children, and especially my young master, I fell into a way of being part valet, part waiter, part man-of-all-work for the captain and his.

This wasn't all. The captain's fine way—for he was handsome still, and a gentleman born, and no mistake—brought him fine friends; and his fine friends brought him debt, because he was obliged to keep up with them. Everything was badly managed, because Mrs. Dalgetty, who'd been a belle, as I said, and good for nothing, as belles never are, but to dress fine and look pretty; because Mrs. Dalgetty, as I said, knew nothing about managing; so the servants ran wild, and were nothing but trouble and expense, and there were nothing but struggling to keep up, and threatening to break down, from day to day.

"The captain is worse than ever," Mrs. Dalgetty would say, sometimes, when things looked bad, and she had a crying fit on. "And Rose is so expensive, and the other girls are growing up. I wish Lionel was older. He is the only one who seems to feel for me at all."

The real truth were—as Lionel were that sweet-natured—he felt for them all; and I must say as they couldn't help being as fond of him in their way as he was of them in his.

"Rabbett," says he to me once, when they was all going out—he was about nine years old then, or thereabout—"Rabbett, if you would like to see Rose before she goes, just stand in the passage, when I go into the drawing-room with her shawl and handkerchief. She has just sent me for them."

Now, my young master loved his mother dearly, but he loved Rose even better; he was allers talking to me of her beauty.

So says I, "I would like to see her." And he runs upstairs, quite pleased, and is down again in a minute.

"I'll leave the door open," he says. And in he goes, with the shawl over his arm, and does leave it open, quite wide enough for me to see through.

Miss Rose was standing by the fire, and beautiful she looked, in her grand evening dress, and so like what her mother had been that it gave me quite a start. There was a gentleman at her side, a-laughing and talking to her, and when Master Lionel goes in, this party turns toward the door, to look at him, and I sees his face, and I gives a start again, for it were Capt. Basil Roscoe.

Now I knew sum'at of Capt. Basil Roscoe, you see, and that's what made me give a start. If ever there was a villain, and he to be called a gentleman, Capt. Basil Roscoe were one. I knew things of him that he little guessed; we servants get to know many queer things. I felt, when I sees him, as if I saw a snake.

"Here comes the shawl," says Capt. Basil, and he held out his hand, as if he meant to put it on for himself, but Miss Rose laughs and stops him.

"No," says she. "Lionel wouldn't like that. Would you, Lionel? He always puts my shawl on for me."

The captain drew back a bit, and gave the boy a sharp glance, but Miss Rose did not see it, for she was bending down to have the shawl put over her white shoulders, and Master Lionel was a-folding it around her, as pleased as could be, laughing, too, boy-like, but, for all that, doing it as deft and graceful as if he'd been born to it.

And, then, when it was done, Miss Rosie put her little hands on the shoulders of his jacket, and kissed him half-a-dozen times, so coaxing, and merry, and happy, that I could not bear to think the time would ever come, when life would look harder to her than it did just then—going out to a grand ball in a pretty dress, and with her lover by her side.

Unless it is true that the devil shrinks from and hates them as has no sins of their own, I should like to know why it was that Basil Roscoe were so ready in taking a dislike to a innocent-faced boy, as never harmed or differed with him; for nothing is more certain than that from the first he did take a dislike to

Master Lionel. It struck me, once or twice, as he not only couldn't bear the sight of him, but that, if he had had the chance, he would not have been sorry to do him a harm. His sneering manner showed it, and his ill-looking, handsome face showed it, apart from a hundred other bits of things. Master Lionel himself found it out soon enough.

"Rabbett," says he, private and confidential, "he doesn't like me, and I don't like him, and I wish he wasn't so fond of Rose. I never did him any harm, you know, Rabbett."

Nateral enough, his spirit is hurt about it, and he takes it a bit hard. But he never says much about it, until one night he comes to me, and I sees he is wonderful quiet, and after a while I made bold to ask what ails him. And the minute I asks him, I sees, by the look in his eyes, that what ails him is something uncommon.

"It's something about Rose," he says, "and it's something about Capt. Roscoe."

A slight huskiness comes in my throat, as makes it necessary for me to clear it.

"Oh!" I says. "Indeed, sir?"

"Yes," he answers. "As I was coming here, I passed him, standing at the corner of the street, with a gentleman, and they were both talking aloud, Rabbett, and laughing. And they were talking about Rose."

Knowing the man so well, and having heard so much of his villainy, my blood fairly boiled at the thought of what he might have been saying; but I made up my mind to speak quietly.

"Did you hear what they said, sir?" I asked. "Are you sure it was her they were speaking of?"

"Yes," says he, "sure, for I heard the gentleman say, 'What? Pretty Rose Dalgetty?' And then Roscoe answered, 'Even she might get tiresome.' And they both laughed. Rabbett"—and he turned his troubled, questioning boy's face to me, as if he was just awakening to some sort of bewildered fear, and wanted help—"what did he mean when he said she might get tiresome?

And what made them laugh as they did? They were laughing at her—my sister Rose."

"No gentleman would have done it, sir," I answered, not knowing what else to say.

"I know that," he says. "But what did they mean? You are older than me, Rabbett, and perhaps you can understand more than that it was not what a gentleman would have done."

But of course I could not tell him that. If it meant nothing worse, it at least did mean as Miss Rose's lover had so little respect for her that he could bandy her name among his companions with something like a sneer; so I tried my best to lead him away from the subject. If he'd been an ordinary kind of young gentleman, and he so very young yet, I might have managed it; but being the little fellow he was, the suspicion that his sister had been somewhat slighted stuck to him, and settled itself deep in his mind, and made him thoughtful beyond his years.

And this was far from being the end of it. Little by little, I began to hear a whisper here and there, even among the men, about what people said of Capt. Roscoe being so friendly with the Dalgettys, and partic'ler with Miss Rosie. There was not one of them but said that it would do the pretty young creature no good, if it did her no harm, to be so ready to let him be attentive. He had been such an open rascal in his time, and his character was so well known, that no careful mother would have let her daughter be seen with him, and he was only tolerated in his own set, and among those who were as bad as himself. But Mrs. Dalgetty was too thoughtless and indifferent to see the wrong in him, or to be troubled by what she heard, and the Captain was rarely at home; so Miss Rose was left to herself, and of course did as any other innocent girl would have done, fell in love with a handsome face, and believed in it.

But at last so much was said by outsiders that something came to the Captain's ears as must have roused him, for one evening he comes up to the house in a towering rage, and shuts himself up with Miss Rose

and her mother in the parlor, and has a tremendous row, and makes them both cry, and ends up by forbidding them to speak to Roscoe again.

But though Mrs. Dalgetty gave in, as she always did when the Captain gave his orders, of course Miss Rose would not believe anything against her lover. Things had gone so far by that time that she would have stood out for him against the whole world; and as she dared not openly disobey her father, she fretted until she lost her pretty color and bright spirits, and went about the house looking ill and wretched.

But the matter was not put an end to, as you may imagine. Once or twice, in going from the house to the barracks, I found Capt. Basil Roscoe loitering about not far from the street's end, and more than once I could have sworn that I passed him at dusk with a familiar little figure clinging to his arm. And one night Miss Rosie calls her brother to her, as he was going out on an errand, and, as she bends over him in the door-way, slips a note into his hand, crying pitifully.

"You will take that for me, won't you, dear?" she says. "He is waiting in the Square for it, and he does want it so—so much." And she kisses him, and gives a little sob and runs upstairs.

I don't think it could have been more than three minutes after that when he comes to me, all pale and breathless with running, and lays that there note on the table.

"She wants me to take it to him, Rabbett," he says, "and she was crying when she asked me, and—— What must we do?"

It is not to be expected as we two hadn't talked things over, being the friends we were. I got up and took the note from the table, making a resolution all of a sudden.

"If you'll stay here, sir," I said, "I'll take it myself." And take it I did, and found the rascal waiting, as Miss Rose had said he would be. He gave a black enough scowl when he saw it were me, and it certainly didn't die out when I spoke to him.

"Sir," says I, "I've come here on a poor errand, and I've come unwilling enough, God knows. I've got a note in my hand here—a pitiful little letter from a trusting, innocent girl to a man who, if he does not mean her harm, surely cannot mean her good, or he would not be leading her to meet him, and write to him in underhand ways. And I've been making up my mind, as I came along, to make a appeal to that man, as surely he'll listen to if he has a man's heart in his breast. She is scarcely more than a child, sir, and she knows nothing of the world. Leave her alone, and she may yet be a happy woman; go on as you've begun, and it will be death and heartbreak to her, and her wrongs will lie at your door."

He stands there and looks at me, and, by the light of the lamp we was standing under, I sees his handsome, devilish face, sneering, and triumphing, and scorning me, as if I was a worm in the dirt under his feet.

"My good fellow," he says, "you are a little too late. Hand me that letter, and be off, before I find it necessary to help you. How you got hold of the note I don't know, but I *do* know it was never given to you to deliver, and that I should be well warranted in kicking you back to your quarters, for your deuced impudence and presumption."

But I held to the letter tight.

"Very well, sir," I answers, respectful, but firm as a rock. "This letter goes back to the house, and before night is over the Captain will have read it himself, and can judge for himself what is best——"

I didn't finish, for the next thing I knew was that he strode up to me and grasped hold of me by my collar, and the minute I saw what he meant to do, I felt I had made a mistake in bringing the letter at all, and in fancying that any appeal could touch or move him. There was a struggle between us, but it did not last long; he being strong and lithe, and so much the younger man, gave me no chance; and it were scarcely three seconds before he threw me on the pavement;

and leaving me there, a trifle stunned, walked off with the letter in his hand.

I knew things must be pretty bad then. He would never have been so desperate and determined, if he had not meant to do his worst; and when I made my way back, I felt sick with fear. Master Lionel was sitting by the bit of fire in the grate, when I opened the door, and he turns round and looks at me, and changes color.

"Rabbett," he says, "there is blood on your face."

"Perhaps so, sir," I says. "I've had a fall."

And then I sits down and tells him all about it; about what I had meant to do, and what I had done, and I ends up by asking him what he thinks we had better do, now that my plans had failed.

"Master Lionel," I says, "it would seem a dreadful hard sort of thing to do, if we spoke to the Captain."

He turns quite pale at the thought of it.

"Oh, no," he says, "Rabbett, I wouldn't do it. He would be so angry with Rose, and even with mamma. You remember my telling you what he said before."

I remembered well enough, and a pretty hard thing it was to say, even if it had been said in a passion, and not half meant. He had threatened to turn Miss Rose out of doors if she spoke to Roscoe again. He must have heard something bad enough to have been so roused.

"Well," I ventures, "what can we do, sir?"

"Watch," says he. "I can think of nothing else to do just yet, Rabbett. I will watch Rose, and you shall watch Roscoe; and if the worst comes, and we must tell papa, we must. I suppose, Rabbett, that Roscoe will try to run away with Rose, as Farquhar ran away with that pretty Miss Lewis?"

"Yes, sir," I answers, "I'm afraid he will. But he is a worse man than Farquhar; and if Miss Rose goes away with him, I'm afraid he'll treat her hard enough when he tires of her, as such men as him always tires of young ladies."

"It would be better, Rabbett," says he, fixing his

dark eyes solemnly on the fire, "it would be better that Rose should die. I know that."

"I am afeard, sir," says I, "that you are right."

God knows how he had learned to understand, but understand he did, and he were that sad and wise about it that my very heart ached. He had seen an old enough side of life, had Master Lionel, living among the set he did, but he were a young gentleman as nothing could spoil. His nature were that fine-grained.

We kept our watch faithful all that week and part of the next, but we found out very little, though we had our suspicions—Master Lionel and me—as things was going on pretty badly in a secret way. But at last the very worst thing as could have happened burst upon us all at once.

I was up at the house one evening, doing something or other for Mrs. Dalgetty, when of a sudden I heard a tremendous loud ring at the door-bell; and going in a hurry to answer it, the Captain himself strode past me into the hall, all in a flame with the wine he had been drinking, and the passion he were in. I had seen him in towering enough tempers often before, but I had never seen him look as he did then. It was my impression he were pretty near mad; indeed, I thought so then, and have thought so since. How could he have done what he did that night, unless he had not been quite himself?

"Rabbett," says he, "where's Miss Rose?"

"In her own room, sir," says I, wishing with all my heart that I could have told him she were not in.

"Rabbett," says he, "where's Mrs. Dalgetty?"

"In *her* own room," says I—"lying down, a-trying to get rid of a headache."

"Then," says he, "go and tell Miss Rose to come down to me at once."

I think I must have looked upset, myself, when I knocked at Miss Rose's door to deliver the Captain's message, for the minute the words were out of my mouth, she turned quite pale and scared-looking, and began to tremble.

"Oh, Rabbett," she says, the tears coming into her great, pretty, dark eyes, "is anything the matter? Does he look angry?"

"I must say, Miss," I answers, "as he seems a bit more pepperyer than common, but I hope it's nothing much."

"Oh, Rabbett," she says, beginning to cry, and wringing her poor little helpless hands, "I know it is something dreadful. I daren't go down. I am so frightened."

But she were obliged to go down, and go down she did, a-trembling all over, and out-and-out faint with fear. She had always been a timid, little affectionate creature, and the Captain were pretty hard to face when his temper were up.

I am not ashamed to confess as I stayed as near within hearing distance as I could, without positively eavesdropping. I own up as I had my fears as to what the end of it all would be, knowing the Captain were drove too wild to be wise, or even reasonable, and I wanted to be near enough to see Miss Rose when she came out of the room, and say a comforting word to her, if she seemed to need one.

But she came out of the room in a different manner to what even I had expected. The minute she went in I heard the sound of Mrs. Dalgetty crying, and the Captain storming, and for a quarter of an hour after the storm fairly raged. The Captain stamped and swore, Mrs. Dalgetty sobbed, and tried to put in a word now and then, but Miss Rose seemed to be too much stunned to speak. I never heard her voice after the first few moments, and at last the door opened again, and she came running out, her beautiful dark eyes wide open, her innocent face as white as death. She did not see me, but ran past where I stood, up to her own bedroom, and there was that in her look as brought my heart into my mouth, and, queer as it may seem to you, the first thing I thought of was Master Lionel.

"There's harm been done," says I to myself, "deadly

harm, and no one can undo it but one as loves her, and that she's fond of herself in her girl's way; the one as she needs now is that there fine little fellow as was almost like a little lover to her."

And when she came down I feels surer of it than ever; for in three minutes more she did come down, with her hat and jacket on, ready to go out. And her face was even whiter than before; and when she sees me, she holds out her hand, her eyes looking big and bright with a dangerous sort of shine.

"Good-bye, Rabbett," she says. "I am going."

"Miss Rose," says I, "where are you going to?"

Then she smiles, sad and bitter, and a bit hard.

"Ask papa," she answers. "He ought to know. He sent me away. I don't exactly know myself, unless—unless one person in the world loves me well enough to take me."

"Miss Rose," I breaks out, "for God's sake don't go to Basil Roscoe."

She dragged her hand away from mine, and her eyes flashed fire.

"You all hate him!" she cried; "but I have chosen him before all the world. Papa said I must choose, and I have chosen. I am going to Basil Roscoe."

And before I could speak another word, she had darted out of the door, all on fire, and desperate, as one might say, and was gone.

I knew it would be of no use speaking to the Captain. Since he had as good as turned the poor innocent creature out of house and home, he was not the one to go to for help. When he was cooler, he would see his mistake, and repent it bitter enough; but just now to go to him would only make him madder than ever.

Well, just at that very minute, in come Master Lionel. There might have been some sort of a fate in it. He jumps up them stone steps, two at a time, and bangs at that open front door, clean out of breath, and looking wonderful like his sister, in his excitement.

"Where's Rose gone to, Rabbett?" he says. "I have

just seen her walking fast—almost running down the street, and she would not stop for me. What has been the matter?"

I ups and tells him. I weren't afeard of doing it. I knew him to be that there ready, and brave, and affectionate.

"Rabbett," he said, in a jiffy, "come along with me."

"Master Lionel," I asks, "where to?" For, the fact were, my head weren't as clear as his, and I were a bit bothered as to what would be the best thing to be done first.

"I am going to Captain Roscoe's lodgings," he answers, as steady as you please.

And so, if you'll believe me, off we goes, out into the street, him a-keeping step beautiful as he always did, but not saying a word until at last I speak to him.

"Master Lionel," I says, "what are you thinking about?"

"I am thinking," he answers, his dark eyes shining, "about what I am going to say to Roscoe."

But it weren't so easy to find Roscoe. We did not know exactly where his lodgings were, and so we had to inquire in first one place and then another. The people we fancied could tell us, knew nothing definite when we went to them; and when we got the name of the street, it were hard to find. But we did find it at last, after a great deal of trouble, and a great deal of delay, which was worse. The delay was what upset us, for both of us felt pretty certain that Captain Basil Roscoe would lose very little time in getting Miss Rose away, out of the reach of her friends, if he once found her willing to go with him.

By the time we reached the end of the street where he lived, Master Lionel were that worked up and excited that he was growing paler and paler, and his eyes were like lanterns in his face, and he caught hold of my hand, and held it hard and fast.

"Rabbett," he says, "what if we should be too late?"

"I can't think such bad luck could happen to us, sir," I answers him back.

And then it were—just at that instant—as his sharp young eyes spied something out ahead of us, for he drew his hand away, and started running, just throwing back a word or so to me.

"There's a carriage before the door," he said, "and they are getting into it."

He were up that street like a deer, and in half a minute I were with him; but when I comes up, all out of breath, he were on the carriage-step, holding the door open; and, what's more, holding at bay the black rascal who stood near, sneering and raging at him by turns. "Rabbett," he cries out, "help me to hold the door open. No—go to the horses' heads. Now, Rose, get out."

I went to the horses' head, as I would have done if the Captain himself had give the order, instead of "The Captain's Youngest." It made my heart ache, too, to hear the ring in the little chap's voice, so like his father's, and then to remember what the Captain might have been—and what he were. Even the driver were struck all of a heap by the youngster's pluck, and were so busy looking at him that he let me take my stand, without a word against it.

"Look here, mate," he says to me. "Here's a rum go!"

"It's bad enough," says I. "Perhaps you'll oblige me with them reins?"

"If you don't come down from that step," says Roscoe, saying every word slow, as if he was trying to hold himself back from striking the boy a blow as would kill him, "you impudent young devil, I will take the whip from the box there and cut you to pieces!"

Then Miss Rose bends forward. It is my impression as the cruel, murderous sound in the fellow's voice was something she had never heard before, and it frightened her.

"Don't speak to him in that way, Basil," she says. "Oh, Lionel, dear, you shouldn't have come. You must go back. You must, indeed. I shall never come home again, Lionel." And she burst out crying.

"I shall go back, Rose," says the boy; "but you must come with me. Rabbett and I came to fetch you, and we shall not leave you." And then he looks at Roscoe square. "I am not afraid of your cutting me to pieces with your whip, sir," he says. "Rabbett will see to that. But," and the fire blazed up in his voice and his face and his eyes, as grand as if he had been the Captain himself, "if I had come alone, I would not have left this carriage-door unless Rose had come with me. You might have used your whip, but you couldn't have made me do that."

"Am I," says Roscoe, panting with the passion he dare not let out, "am I to throw you into the street under the horses' hoofs, you impudent young devil?"

But Master Lionel's back was turned to him. He was pleading with his sister.

"Rose, dear," he says, "come home with me. You will come home with me, I know." And he caught hold of her hand.

God knows how it all happened—I don't. If I had only been quick enough to see in time, the Captain's youngest might have been alive this day—a brave young fellow, such as the Captain had been in those first days in India—a brave, handsome young soldier, as would have been a honor to his country, and a staunch friend yet to me.

But that weren't to be. Just as he stood there, his foot on the carriage-step, a-holding his sister's hand, the passion in the heart of the rascal watching him broke forth. He caught him by the shoulder, there were a short struggle as the boy tried to free himself, and before I could reach them he had whirled him away from the door—with greater force than he intended, I've tried to believe. The frightened horses lashed out their hoofs and sprang forward, struggling over the child's very body as he lay stunned under their feet.

Scoundrel as he was, I never could make it look square to myself as the man meant the harm he did. His face was out and out deathly, as he leapt forward to save him as quick as I did myself. But we were both

too late. We could only drag at the reins, and stop the horses in time to prevent the wheels passing over him —that were all.

We had him out in a minute, and Miss Rose was out of the carriage, kneeling on the pavement by him, and the driver was down off his box.

"Great God!" says Roscoe, "I never meant to do him such a harm. He's dead!" And he shuddered all over, with fear, perhaps, as much as anything else.

But he weren't dead, and he hadn't even fainted, though he were stunned at first. I had lifted him in my arms, and he lay against me, panting a bit, and stone-white, all but for a stain of blood on one temple. It weren't his head as was so badly hurt, it were his side, where one of the horses had lashed out and struck him. And as sure as I'm a living man, in a few minutes he opens his eyes and lays hold of his sister's hand.

"Rose," he says, "will you—go home—with me—now?"

She knelt over him, wringing her hands, and sobbing as if her heart would break. She would not let her lover come near her. When he tried to speak, she shrank away, shuddering.

It's my belief as what she had seen in his face during the last ten minutes would have broke her faith in him, even if the young master had met no hurt. And now she were that terrified that she were as helpless as a child.

"Is he much hurt?" she kept saying. "Rabbett, oh, Rabbett! let me take him home to mamma. Put him into the carriage." And then she turned upon Roscoe, fierce and wild. "Go away," she cried out. "You have killed him! Go away, and never let me see you again!"

There were a dreadful house when we took him home. Mrs. Dalgetty went out of one faint into another, as she always did when she were frightened. The servants ran backward and forward doing nothing, the children crowded round us crying, and the Captain looked on at all we did like a man in a dream.

He were hurt, and bruised, and broken that bad—poor little fellow—that when the doctor came, and were beginning to go to work on him, he looks up at me with his bright, troubled eye, and says to me:

"Rabbett, please take hold of my hand."

I were that near breaking down and sobbing out loud that I were ashamed of myself. It were a comfort to me, in many a day after, to think I had took hold of his hand, and that he had asked me to do it.

And when the hard job was over, the doctor put his hands into his coat-pockets, and stands looking at him for a minute or so, and then he turns to me and beckons me out of the room.

"Sir," I ventured to say, "Master Lionel — will he——" But I could not finish somehow. I meant to say, "Will he get over it?"

"No," says he. "I am very sorry to say it; but he will not."

Will you believe me as the words struck me like a slung-shot. Not having no family of my own, and never having clung to nothing on earth as I had clung to that there generous, neglected little fellow, just at that minute I felt as if I'd got a blow as was too hard to stand up against. I couldn't face it straight. When I had been lonely in my way, he had been lonely in his, and we had been a help and a comfort to each other in ways as outsiders never understood.

"Sir," I puts it to him, quite hoarse when I gets my voice back, "when——" And I couldn't finish that question neither.

"Well," he answers me back, "I am afraid before morning."

I went back to the room and stayed there all night.

It seemed a strange sort of thing that at the very last him and me was together alone, as we always had seemed to be. He had coaxed Miss Rose to go to bed; he would not rest until she went; and when she bent down to kiss him, he says to her, in a whisper, quite bright and cheerful: "Don't cry, Rose. It's all right."

And then the Captain gets tired, and begins to doze,

and Mrs. Dalgetty falls asleep on the sofa; and so Master Lionel and me was left together; me watching him, and listening to the clock ticking; him lying quiet, with his eyes shut. But toward daybreak he gets a bit restless, and stirs, and the next thing, I sees him looking at me, quite wide awake.

"Rabbett," says he, in a bit of a hurry, "open the window."

And when I goes and does it, and comes back, he puts out his hand.

"Rabbett," he says, "I'm very fond of you"; and something wistful comes into my eyes, and I sees a faint gray shadow creeping up over his face. "I was always fond of you, and I always shall be fond of you," says he. "Don't let my hand go, Rabbett." And the next minute the gray shadow has changed his brave, handsome, childish face all at once and altogether. He gives me a innocent, bright look—just one, as if he were wondering why I shook so—and shuts his eyes. He would never open them again on me, as was so fond and proud of him in my poor way. When they opened again, he would see something brighter than the morning sky, as was just growing red and golden before the east window.

Of course they all fretted after him for a while, finding out, most likely, as he'd made himself dearer to them than they'd thought before he were gone. They could not have helped missing him, if they had been more careless than they were. Sometimes I fancied as the Captain was checked a bit, and were sad, and a trifle remorseful, in secret, but his days of being open and soft-hearted was over, and it were hard to tell. I know it were a long time before he forgave Miss Rose, though for her sake the matter was hushed up, and no one but themselves knew exactly how the accident happened. Miss Rose could never bear the sound of Basil Roscoe's name again, and she married a good man a few years after, and made him a good wife. So the little fellow as lost his life through his love for her was not sacrificed in vain.

Here is an instance of craft overcoming craft. It is from the pen of Alexander Pothey, and has been translated for ROMANCE by H. Hamilton.

POPE PIFTINE.

In Southern Russia, on the banks of the river Sloutch, is situated the little village of Brakowysk. At the extreme end of the village rises the church, surmounted by a pretty dome with a slender wooden steeple, the roof of which, covered with shining tin, reflects under the rays of the sun the light of a magic mirror. The tiny cupola on the porch is held up by four stone pillars painted a superb yellow. In the shadow of this edifice nestles the isba of Father Piftine, the priest of Brakowysk. It is a wooden house, decent and comfortable, painted gray, with clumsily-made pillars. On entering the hall we cross ourselves piously before the image of the Mother of God which shines from the depth of a niche, placed under the central partition. A curtain of flowered calico is hung near the statuette. What would you? Human nature has its moments of weakness, and even the wise man himself, 'tis said, sins several times a day. When the priest is befuddled, which often happens, when he is angry, which is very seldom, when, finally, he feels his soul agitated by some wicked thought, he pulls the calico curtain on its rod and spares the divine image the sight of an unseemly spectacle.

In a large armchair the priest dreamily sits before the table, on which is a bottle of *eau de vie* scarcely touched. He is a robust man, this Father Piftine. That forest of black and curly hair which covers his head is not, as you might be led to believe, a cap of lamb-skin. No, it is nature's own covering. That thick, wavy, fan-shaped beard is also his, and those two tufts, like mustaches, which shelter two black eyes brilliant as diamonds. The father is all hair, so much so that it is difficult to distinguish under the cheek-

bones where the skin is covered with purple blotches. Pope, my good pope, my dear father, you drink too much, and I see in these little spots a tendency to apoplexy. Your head, which sinks into a strong chest with scarcely any neck to be seen, confirms me in this opinion.

The priest poured out a huge glass of *eau de vie*, of which he drank off an ample bumper, closing his eyes and clicking his tongue softly against his palate, two signs of satisfaction understood by all good drinkers of every nation. Replacing the glass on the table, he uttered a sort of groan.

"Nagrada," said he, "Nagrada, what are you thinking of?" Nagrada ran in immediately. She was the priest's wife, a good and worthy little woman of about thirty, fair, round, plump, with large clear blue eyes and a rosy countenance which was forever smiling.

"What is it?" she said eagerly. "What do you wish, my dear little master?"

"Nagrada," replied the priest, "are you not ashamed? Do you wish to see me die before your eyes? Have you forgotten that I have eaten nothing since this morning, and that it is past mid-day? How do you think I can have an appetite for my supper unless you immediately serve me with a light collation?"

"Ungrateful one, you complain while I am exerting myself to provide you with a nice little treat."

"What have you prepared?" demanded the priest, emptying his glass.

"Two duck's eggs fried in nut oil," replied laughingly the blonde priestess.

"Two eggs! Oh, wife, it is a joke in very bad taste."

"Now calm yourself," said Nagrada, arranging on the table a pure white cloth.

Then going and coming from the kitchen to the dining-room, she placed successively before her husband a large bowl of soup, where among the raw cabbage the spoon frequently came in contact with small squares of salted meat; the tea-kettle, which perfumed the air with a delicate aroma; an enormous earthenware jug,

containing at least three litres of home-made beer called kislitchi; a platter overflowing with cucumber salad; and, finally, to complete the symmetry of the whole, a plate loaded with thin slices cut from the head of a wild boar.

The good priest deigned to smile, and, falling to, quickly absorbed the soup, the tea, the beer, the cucumbers, and the boar's head. But already the thrifty housewife had brought in a dish of mutton with oatmeal, and the back of a sturgeon dried in smoke, which Piftine disposed of after emptying a full glass of ratafia. Five or six fritters, brown and slightly crisp, with a flask of anise-seed cordial, completed this respectable collation.

However, the father still waited, and as his wife filled his tchonbone with a long, fine, yellow tobacco, he asked plaintively, "Nagrada, Nagrada?"

"Dear little master."

"You are forgetting."

"What now?"

"The two duck's eggs fried in nut oil."

"Oh, papa, there was nothing in that. I said it as a joke."

"Wife, it is wrong, a great wrong, to tell such a falsehood, for it leaves my stomach in suspense."

Poor Nagrada felt thoroughly confused, and the just reproaches of the pope were perhaps to be accentuated with greater severity, when their attention was called to the galloping of horses at full trot along the road.

Two horsemen stopped suddenly before the priest's house, and, after alighting, fastened the bridles to the garden hedge.

Father Piftine looked at them through the window.

"The barine!" he cried, turning pale.

"Count Gregory!" joyously exclaimed his wife.

Count Gregory Grigori was a young man about thirty, tall, slender, elegant of figure and quick of glance. His countenance presented the purest type of the handsome Slav race; fine light hair, high smooth brow, large blue eyes, as clear, soft, and limpid as those of a

young girl; long, delicate aquiline nose, a remarkable chin, and a mouth whose expression, somewhat bantering, was concealed under the carefully arranged mustache. He wore the national costume, at once picturesque and convenient; the astrachan bonnet, the ample touloupe, displaying the vest, gathered in at the waist by a woolen scarf, and the pantaloons tucked into high boots.

In two strides the count gained the steps of the isba; then he opened the door of the dining-room. He bent before the holy image and signed himself with his left hand; then, approaching the priestess, he kissed her rosy cheeks, crying, "How are you, my good Nagrada? And you, dear Father Piftine?"

He shook the priest's hand cordially.

"We are well," replied Nagrada, blushing with pleasure, "but you, barine, what happy chance led you into our poor house?"

"I came to have a serious chat with your husband, and I am certain, dear mother, that my companion, Paul Pastoukoff, would willingly accept some refreshments in your kitchen."

"Without a doubt, without a doubt," said Nagrada, who understood the invitation. "I will go there in an instant"; and hastening from the hall she cried: "Paul! Paul Pastoukoff! Come in here, you great ungainly fellow; you must be in a perspiration."

Gregory closed the window, while the priest bolted the door. The conversation lasted more than two hours, during which the count often raised his voice to a tone of command, while the priest mumbled many excuses in a subdued dull monotone.

Count Gregory was the eldest son of Prince Grigori, one of the richest and most powerful seigneurs in the government of Kief. After finishing his studies at home, Gregory entered the military school, which he left with the highest honors. His birth, his fortune, and his thorough education seemed to insure for him a brilliant future, when an accident happened which shattered his dreams. At the siege of Sebastopol he

was a captain on the staff, and during a sortie he was pierced through and through by a French ball. His personal attendant, his denchik, Paul Pastoukoff, found him bleeding on the field of battle, and bore him on his strong shoulders into the entrenchments.

Half-dead, Gregory was carried to Kherson, for to stay at Sebastopol would have deprived him of his last chance of recovery. A learned man, a skilful practitioner, Michel Bobroff, the apothecary, received him in his own house and tended him with the utmost solicitude. Little by little, they began to hope, and Gregory regained some strength. His convalescence lasted more than a year, and it must be acknowledged that the worthy apothecary was seconded in his delicate undertaking by his daughter Marie, who showed an indefatigable devotion.

You understand, do you not? Well, yes; when the captain's health was completely restored, he was deeply in love with the beautiful Marie. In Russian homes strong affections are accompanied by immovable resolutions. Gregory had inherited from his mother a chateau, three villages and some farms, which assured him a revenue more than sufficient to uphold his rank. He was therefore free and independent. Nevertheless, he desired to obtain his father's consent to his projected marriage, and as soon as he was able to support the fatigues of the journey, he departed for Kief, promising to return immediately.

The old Prince Grigori adored his children, but he was a man peculiarly proud of his race, of the services his ancestors and himself had rendered the country, and of the rank his name held on the velvet book of the highest nobility. His second son shared his pride and his prejudices. Andri Grigori, ten years younger than his brother, was puny and delicate, and it was probably to this deplorable state of health that he owed his distrustful, envious, and deceitful character.

Gregory resolutely broached the question on which depended, as he said, the happiness of his whole life, but the disclosure excited the indignation of the prince.

A Grigori espouse the daughter of a petit bourgeois, an obscure apothecary of Kherson! It was altogether too monstrous, and never would he give his consent to such a mésalliance. Andri upheld his father in his anger, and heaped sarcasm on sarcasm at the cost of the apothecary's daughter.

Count Gregory's supplications were unable to overcome his father's repugnance; as to his brother's railleries, he treated them with contempt. Angry and grieved, Gregory departed suddenly for Kherson, where a new sorrow awaited him; the worthy and learned Michel Bobroff had just died of heart disease. The count, sharing Marie's grief, gave her the courage necessary to bear this cruel blow. He busied himself in looking after the interests of the young girl, and these set to rights, he told Marie of his plans, and the child threw herself in tears into his arms.

Andri meanwhile had gone to visit his brother's estates, and he tarried one moment at Pope Piftine's house. There he spoke of Count Gregory's unworthy conduct; of the dishonor he intended to inflict on his family; he swore, blustered, menaced with the most outrageous tortures whoever would lend a hand to this odious marriage. Guided by his mischievous instincts, Andri had divined the future intervention of the priest in the affair.

Poor Piftine was very much troubled and very much frightened at this violent scene, to which he could reply only by the most commonplace protestations. He endeavored to calm his visitor's anger, but the young man redoubled his fury, and declared that he was speaking in the name of his father, Prince Grigori. Andri's visit was scarcely a month before the day on which we have seen Count Gregory alight at the door of the priest's isba.

But the conversation between the count and the priest has come to an end. The windows of the isba are opened, the bolt is drawn, and the good Nagrada in the kitchen ceases her small talk with Paul Pastoukoff, who with the back of his hand removes from his long mus-

taches the last traces of the last glass of currant wine. On opening the door, Count Gregory utters these words:

"Then everything is settled, is it not, my dear father? These are the names you will inscribe on your register: Gregory Grigori—Marie Bobroff—and as witnesses, my faithful Paul Pastoukoff and Nicolas Tamboff."

"It shall be as you desire," replied Piftine in a low voice.

"Accept this as a wedding gift," continued Gregory, holding out to the priest a thick roll of money. The father wished to refuse, but the barine insisted so strongly that, with a gesture of deprecation, the priest at last put it in his pocket.

"This evening at midnight," again said Gregory, remounting his horse.

"At midnight," said the priest, bowing.

The horsemen disappeared along the road in a cloud of dust.

Nagrada, distressed at her husband's subdued appearance, approached as if about to speak, but the father repulsed her gently. "Leave me, wife, leave me, I beg of you. I am very much disturbed, and feel ill at ease. I think a short walk along the river would calm me, and I will return in an hour or two." For a long time Nagrada watched her husband, who took the road along the Sloutch until he disappeared in an avenue of linden trees.

It was dark when the father regained his isba, where his little wife awaited him, very anxious at his long absence. "Pour Dieu!" she exclaimed. "What has come over you? Your soup of sterlets has been cold these two hours, as well as the fish-pie, which would have been so nice if eaten warm; are you ill, dear pope? Really, you have acted very queer for some time."

Louha, that is to say, the soup, and the koulebeak, the pie, presented a most tempting aspect, but who could think of eating at such a serious time? The priest, always non-committal, said to his wife: "Leave everything on the table, Nagrada. I will sup later. I have work to do this evening, and wish to be alone. Go to

rest, wife, and may God give you good sleep." This was said in a tone that admitted of no reply. Nagrada took her little lamp and sighed, on going, a loud "Good-night, Petre."

The priest for more than an hour traversed the room in every direction. Then he opened the drawer of the table, and took from it a large book, and began to turn over its leaves. It was the register where he inscribed baptisms, marriages, and deaths. He seated himself, and drawing from his pocket the paper given him by the barine, he dipped his pen in the ink and began to make out, on a clean white page, a certificate of marriage, when he suddenly fell into a fit of uproarious laughter. This access of mirth lasted but a short while; the priest's brow became overcast. Little by little, the brilliancy faded from his eyes, and his smiling mouth contracted. Finally he took an heroic resolution; he rose and drew together on its rod the calico curtain, that hung near the niche and the holy Virgin; thus concealed, the father returned to his place and scribbled away with unequaled ardor.

When he had finished this task, he took from a nail on the wall the keys of the church, and left his house noiselessly, carrying the register under his arm. The night was dark, without moon or stars; the whole village reposed. The Pope half-opened the door of the church, and lighted two candles near the tabernacle; feeble lights that enlarged the temple by projecting their thin rays into the midst of shadows.

At midnight precisely, a *caléche* stopped at the entrance of the chapel and, while the coachman and his companion sprang nimbly from their seats and held the kibich motionless, Count Gregory descended, encouraging by word and gesture a young woman, who was trembling with violent emotion. The group approached the sanctuary, and the priest proceeded with the religious ceremony, which was quickly accomplished. After demanding the names of the witnesses in full, he murmured the customary prayers asking God's blessing on the newly-married couple; then by the flickering

light of a candle, each of the assistants affixed his signature to the certificate written previously in the register. When all was finished, Count Gregory bore his wife to the carriage, while Paul Pastoukoff and his friend took their seats preparatory to their gallop to the chateau. Father Piftine extinguished the lights, locked the doors and regained his apartment. A cock, it may be Saint Peter's own, began in the distance his matutinal song; a cry of hope or remorse, according to the state of one's conscience. If we are to judge by the thirst and appetite which he displayed before the provisions of the good Nagrada, the conscience of the priestly father was certainly of the first quality.

A short while after her marriage, the Countess Gregory came to St. Petersburg, where she was presented at court. Her beauty, her grace, the sweetness of her disposition, the charm of her cultivated mind, gained her the affection and esteem of all. The emperor himself took pleasure in her conversation, and manifested a particularly friendly feeling for her. In brief, her success was complete, and her *salon* was frequented by the highest and best of the nobility. During the absence of his younger son Andri, the old Prince Grigori met the Countess, and became reconciled by her charms and the caresses of her two adorable children.

I have finished, dear reader, relating to you this dream of happiness, and I will now enter upon the catastrophes and lamentable incidents, which may prove more diverting. Old Prince Grigori died, leaving to his son an immense fortune. During a bear-hunt Gregory perished, the victim of an accident, and Pastoukoff succumbed to the wounds received in defending his master. The Countess, now left a widow with three children, was forced to contest the legality of her marriage, and, at the end of a long suit brought against her by Andri Grigori, she was driven from her home.

The claimants affirmed that a real marriage had never taken place, and when the case was brought before the tribunal, they produced for the judges a certified document drawn up by the ispravnick of Tscherringow, which

affirmed that the priest, Petro Piftine, had united according to the forms and customary regulations Marie, only daughter of Michel Bobroff, deceased, with Paul Pastoukoff, formerly a sergeant in the regular army. Count Gregory Grigori figured only as a witness in this official act, and his signature was affixed near the one called Nicolas Tamboff, a travelling merchant, whose whereabouts they were unable to discover. With such testimony the issue of the suit could only be sorrowful, and Marie, looked upon as Pastoukoff's widow, found herself condemned by the tribunal. Thus it came to pass that this charming woman, who during ten years had merited the consideration and esteem of both court and city, was made to appear as a guilty spouse, who had usurped a title and position to which she had no right, and her children were declared illegitimate.

The unhappy Marie expiated cruelly her past happiness. She went to throw herself at the feet of the Czar, who told her kindly what an interest he took in her misfortunes, and promised he would see to the education of her children. Without a doubt she was the victim of an intrigue, but the law had spoken, and it was necessary to yield to its decrees. Half-crazed with despair, Marie left her home, and sought refuge with her children in a modest lodging. She had been there only a few days when Nicolas Tamboff presented himself one evening. The merchant had returned from a long journey in Asia, and, he remarked, had had but very poor luck in his business; he was poorer than when he departed. Having heard of the result of the proceedings, he came to put himself at the disposition of the countess.

"If you will agree to give me twenty-five thousand roubles," said he, after finishing his recital, "I swear to you, barine, that you shall have justice rendered you."

"Alas, my poor Nicolas, I am completely ruined, and have not that amount of money."

"I will be content with your promise, but at present I require five thousand roubles, and before a month you will have confounded the impostors."

Marie had confidence in him. She sold her remaining jewels to secure the sum demanded.

Eight days after this incident, you could have seen on the road from Brakowysk a comfortable carriage, in which, with great dignity, sat Nicolas Tamboff, dressed as a boyard or lord. By chance—but was it chance?—a wheel of the *kibich* broke off not a half-a-hundred steps from the priest's door. Nicolas fumed and blustered to such an extent that the father came out and recognized him. The merchant had such a wealthy appearance that Piftine insisted he should accept his hospitality while the coachman went into the village to seek a workman to repair the *caléche*. "You will not be very well entertained," said he, "for Nagrada is indisposed and keeps her bed, but we can always find eggs and a flitch of bacon."

"Do you think, dear father, that I travel without provisions, when it sometimes happens that I am three and four days without meeting a suitable inn? No, no, I like my comfort, and since my business is prosperous, I do not set out without supplies."

Indeed, Nicolas, with the priest's assistance, drew from the body of the carriage two exceedingly unwieldy boxes that they bore into the isba. *Bonté du ciel!* the dealer had not exaggerated that he loved to live well. The priest opened his eyes in surprise when he saw him unpack pies with thick crusts, ragouts of every kind, and enormous sausages. But his bewilderment was redoubled when Nicolas drew from the second box bottles and flasks of twenty different varieties. There were wines of Burgundy, sealed with red wax, champagne crowned with silver, *eau de vie* from France and Tokay; in all, fifty bottles—yes, fifty at the very least. The cloth was soon laid, and the two comrades seated themselves *vis-à-vis*.

Petre Piftine had aged in these ten years, his beard was white, his nose and cheeks were of a deep red, but he had preserved a robust appetite and a thirst more remarkable than ever. It would be impossible to believe how much he ate and drank, if you did not know;

how much gayety, how many joyous songs and amusing recitals, dried the throat and enlarged the stomach. The feast lasted six hours, and it was finally a flask of kirsch which triumphed over the priest and caused him to roll under the table.

Nicolas assured himself that the priest's sleep was not feigned; then, pale and trembling, he opened the drawer where he found the state register. He ran over it rapidly, and stopped at the page where Marie's marriage was registered. He drew from his pocket an inkstand, an eraser and other instruments. Yes, the priest had inserted the soldier's name instead of the barine's; he had committed a crime. By the light of the lamp, Nicolas erased with care the name of Paul Pastoukoff; he smoothed the paper with infinite precaution; then, upon the same place he wrote a name. Which? That of Gregory Grigori? Oh, no! not so foolish, the worthy Nicolas. He wrote the same name he had made to disappear, Paul Pastoukoff! After replacing the register in the drawer, Nicolas Tamboff slept the sleep of the just. The following day, on taking leave of the priest, he had the generosity to give him what was left of the provisions.

There is no necessity of troubling you longer; your sagacity can easily suggest the end of my recital.

On his return to St. Petersburg, Nicolas presented himself at the house of the Countess Gregory, with empty hands, 'tis true, but radiant. He decided to demand a reopening of she case. The suit was carried anew before the judges, but this time they exacted that the certificate itself be produced. It was easy to prove the change of names, that had not been remarked, probably, by the ispravnick in his examination. Nicolas Tamboff under oath was retained as a witness. They would have made Petre Piftine appear at court, but the worthy man had died of indigestion.

To the satisfaction of the public, Andri Grigori lost his suit, and the Countess Gregory, re-established in the possessions of her husband, devoted the remainder of her life to the education of her children.

Here is the familiar telegraph operator, and the train that persists in going wrong; but there are several other elements that make this story by Tom P. Morgan one of the best of its kind.

AT LONE MOUND STATION.

"Good-bye, Hal!" the conductor called from his perch in the turret of the yellow caboose of freight train No. 43.

"Good-bye, Abe!" Keanley answered, as he trudged along beside the long train toward the small depot, beyond the brown water-tank. The engine soon slaked its thirst at the tank and got under way again. A moment later the caboose passed Keanley, and, with ever increasing speed, swayed onward toward the curve at the Lone Mound.

As Keanley neared the little depot, the strains of a violin floated toward him. Soft and sweet came the tune, like the tinkle of musical glasses, and there was in it a pathetic, wailing undertone, as if the player was striving to tell in music of a heart-ache and trials bravely borne.

Keanley could hardly repress an ejaculation of surprise as he entered the little office and beheld the wielder of the magic bow, a pale-faced boy, almost a child. As the lad carefully deposited the violin in the open box at his side, and slowly rose, Keanley saw that the little fellow was a cripple. One leg, distorted and shriveled, swung, a useless member. Resting on his crutches, the boy raised his hat.

"You're the new agent, I s'pose," he said.

"Yes," Keanley answered, "I am the new agent. And who are you?" he continued, kindly. "The ex-agent?"

"No, only his son," the boy replied.

"And where is your father?"

"Over there, on the slope."

The boy's chin quivered as he spoke. Keanley looked from the window. On the slope of the Lone Mound was a tiny grave-yard. One oblong black blotch in its midst marked a new-made grave. The agent was there.

"Pardon me," Keanley said; "I did not know. My instructions simply told me to take charge of the station. I supposed the agent had been promoted or discharged."

"He was promoted," the boy said gravely.

"And what will you do now?" Keanley asked, presently.

"I don't know," the boy answered. "I've been thinking and thinking, but it's no use. I don't know what to do. P'raps the superintendent will give me a place in an office. I can write a fair hand and wire pretty well, but I ain't much on heavy work."

This last with a rueful glance at his crutches.

Then Keanley lied, and deliberately, too. He had no need of an assistant, but a lightning resolve flashed through his brain, and he said to the cripple:

"You are just the chap I am looking for. I need a boy to help me."

"What for?" asked the lad.

"To—to—why, to write and look out for things generally," Keanley answered, half desperately. "I'll feel safer to gad about when I have an assistant whom I know I can trust. Then, too, I might be sick, you know."

The boy looked doubtfully at him. "If you are in earnest, I'll jump at the chance to stay," he said.

"In earnest?" Keanley cried, in pretended pique at the lad's doubt. "Of course, I am. Do you think I don't know my own mind, young man?"

The boy said nothing. And so it was settled, and crippled Ben became Keanley's assistant, although there was not work enough to occupy half of one person's time.

As the days when the breeze brought from the slope the perfume of the wild verbenas were succeeded by those when the snow came with a rush and hiss against

the little depot, Keanley grew more than fond of the little cripple. To be sure, to board and clothe the lad and to pay him an occasional dollar made quite a gap in each month's salary, but Keanley never grudged a penny of it. It was pay enough to witness the boy's gratitude, and to see the lad's great eyes following him with their glances of positive beatitude.

Often and often the violin sang its sweet songs, but now they seldom had the pitiful, wailing undertone.

The lad's father had planned to do justice to his talent by having him taught by a master of the violin. Now, Keanley and little Ben planned in a happy, visionary way. They were to save what money they could, and thus little Ben was to have the coveted musical instruction. But, at best, the accumulation of funds went on slowly.

The plans of the two went further than this. Keanley had, "once upon a time," been foolish enough to fall in love with old Senator Hicks's daughter, and she had returned his love. The old senator, when he found how matters stood, proceeded to squelch the whole affair. He even forgot the time when he had been as much of a pauper as the young fellow he sent packing from his presence.

The girl, with her tear-wet face upturned to his, promised Keanley to wait for him till he succeeded in accumulating the $10,000 that the old senator named as the amount of wealth Keanley must possess before he could aspire to winning her. Then, when orders had sent Keanley to the west, he had gone with the determination strong within him to very soon gain the money and the girl.

But he speedily grew despondent. The fates seemed against him. He struck no bonanza or highway to speedy wealth, and finally half gave up the struggle. The money that would flow to little Ben as the substantial reward of his genius was to be invested by Keanley, who, in this manner, would soon obtain the coveted $10,000. Then, when prosperity smiled upon the senator's new-found son-in-law, little Ben's wealth

was to be returned to him. The two plotters placed great faith in this plan, chimerical as it was.

Then, came the great storms, and, with them, one that the "oldest inhabitant," popularly supposed to know everything, declared was the largest and heaviest rainfall since '31. The creeks seemed to have wholly forgotten their boundaries, and, later, the work begun by the rain was completed by the cloud-burst, over in the next county, near the head of Hackberry Creek. It was nearly 10 o'clock when a message went clicking by, and Keanley, who had been nursing an aching tooth all day, remarked to Ben, who was playing the violin loudly, to shut out the sound of the rushing rain: "Dispatcher is telling them to look out for an east-bound special that leaves Hamilton at 10:40. That means 11:26 when it passes here."

Ben nodded and went on with his tune. Presently the train dispatcher was heard calling "G." That was Giddings, the station just beyond, where the railroad bridge spanned Hackberry Creek.

"What is the condition of bridge 381?" the message ran.

The operator at Giddings presently clicked back the answer:

"Bridge 381 is O. K. Water high but not dangerous."

The cloud-burst had not yet occurred.

Meanwhile Keanley's tooth grew more painful, till its victim did little but walk the floor and anathematize the offending molar.

"If it don't ease up soon," he said, presently, "I'll tramp over to the settlement and have it out, storm or no storm."

Soon, the pain not abating, he donned his rubber coat and boots and started away in the darkness and storm.

With his violin for company little Ben scarcely felt lonely. He wondered presently if it were not time for Keanley's return. Suddenly the sender began to click furiously: "H. H. H."—the Hamilton call.

Then came the message:

"Bridge 381 is down. For God's sake, hold the special!"

The cloud-burst had done its work. Ben glanced quickly at the clock. The hands indicated a fraction of a minute less than 11:26. The special was on time, and, even as Ben turned, there came the flash of the headlight through the storm that drowned the noise of the engine's approach. No time even to take the red lantern from the cuddy and light it.

Little Ben remembered afterward how, even in the intense excitement of the moment, it had flashed through his mind how useless the effort of the frightened operator at Giddings had been in telegraphing to Hamilton, when he might have known that the special had passed there half an hour before.

The engine gave no call for brakes, and Ben knew that no stop would be made there, and that the train would rush on to destruction at the wrecked bridge at Hackberry Creek. The headlight seemed abreast of him as he flung open the door, and, with a mighty spring on his crutches, threw himself out on the platform of the little depot. There was no use or time to signal, and there seemed nothing to do but to let the train rush on to wreck. Then, like a flash, the little cripple raised his right crutch, and, with the rapidity almost of lightning, hurled it, lance-fashion, at the window of the engine cab, just as it flashed past him. Then he slipped and fell headlong on the wet platform. Passing just above the back of the fireman, as he bent to open the furnace door, the crutch struck the engineer's shoulder with a force that made him cry out. His quick perception took in the situation, and he knew that something serious had caused the train to be signaled in that manner. Soon the train came to a standstill. Then it backed up to the little depot, and, the engineer, crutch in hand, descended hurriedly from the cab. He found the owner of the crutch crawling to his feet with a face much paler than usual. The story was soon told, and then it was retold in the parlor car, where the conductor speedily carried little Ben.

In the cab, the engineer said to the grimy fireman: "Bill, it almost makes me ashamed of myself to have my life saved by such a weak, pale little feller, an' a cripple at that." Though not numerous, the passengers in the parlor car were generous, and the sum of money that they dropped into the hat, passed by a white-bearded man whom they called "Senator," was a goodly one. Then, when little Ben had bashfully expressed his gratitude, he asked, timidly, if any one present could tell him where to go to obtain the coveted musical education. The story of his hopes had to be told, and when he was done, the white-bearded man cleared his throat in a manner that sounded suspiciously as if he was choking back a sob. Then he took Ben into the little depot, and the two talked earnestly together.

When Keanley returned, muddy and wet but minus the aching tooth, he was astonished to see the special standing in front of the depot, and Senator Hicks and little Ben in earnest conversation in the office. The old senator did not appear to recognize Keanley.

"So you are the agent, young man," he said. "Allow me to congratulate you upon your good judgment in selecting so efficient an assistant. Now let me introduce my recently engaged private secretary, who will accompany me when the special leaves."

The old man laid his hand caressingly on Ben's shoulder.

"And," spoke Ben, eagerly, "he says I shall have the best teacher he can find, and all the time I want to study!"

Soon the special left to return to Hamilton, and with it went little Ben.

"Good-bye! Good-bye!" the cripple called from the receding parlor car, and Keanley answered with a mechanical farewell.

Then he sat in the little office and stared moodily at the fire for a long time.

"How lonesome it is without him!" he said, "I loved that little cripple, I think."

Then the sounder began to click from Hamilton, and the message came:

"Good-bye, old fellow. Little Ben."

Then Keanley sat listening to the falling rain for a long time.

Three months later he was surprised at seeing Senator Hicks and little Ben alight from a train at the faded station.

"Young man," said the senator, abruptly, "how much of that $10,000 have you accumulated, hey?"

"A trifle over $100," Keanley answered, dejectedly.

"Near enough, near enough!" jerked out the old man. "This boy has been continually talking of you, and—and—I sometimes change my mind, and—well, there is a girl at my house who seems anxious to see you."

And so it all turned out happily, just as all stories should.

There is a new agent at Lone Mound station now, and Hal Keanley is rising in the lucrative position procured for him by the old senator.

At the wedding that made Keanley Senator Hicks's son-in-law, a young musical artist, who, though a cripple, is rapidly rising in popular favor, held the guests almost spellbound by the strains of a violin, that seemed singing a song of happiness.

Miss Isabel F. Hapgood, who translated the following story for the New York *Independent*, says of it in her introductory note: "This 'skazka,' or fairy tale, furnishes a specimen of the stories which Count Tolstoi has written of late years for popular reading, and for the inculcation of his views. They are written in the most studiously simple manner, in peasant phraseology, and, as a rule, each tale emphasizes but one doctrine. The special interest in this story lies not only in the ingenious way in which the old fairy tale is utilized, where the youngest of three brothers, who is always stupid, weds the King's daughter and attains to greater prosperity than his clever elder brothers, but in the neat manner in which several of the author's favorite theories are introduced—the absolute non-resistance of evil, in whatever form it may present itself; the absurdity and evil of money as a purchasing medium; the superiority of hand over head labor, and so on. As circulated among the people, in its cheap, chap-book form, the cover bears a picture of Ivan mowing, with the imp clinging to his scythe."

IVAN THE FOOL.

A FAIRY TALE.

I.

Once upon a time, in a certain empire, in a certain realm, there dwelt a wealthy peasant. And this wealthy peasant had three sons—Semyon-warrior, Taras-big-belly, and Ivan-fool, and a daughter, Malanya-long-ear, who was dumb. Semyon-warrior went to the wars, to serve the Tzar; Taras-big-belly betook himself to a merchant in the town, to trade; but Ivan the fool remained at home with the maiden, to work and grow round-shouldered with toil. Semyon-warrior won for himself a high position and an estate, and married the daughter of a man of rank. His guerdon was great, and his estate was vast, but all the same he could not make both ends meet; what the husband amassed, that the lady-wife squandered lavishly, so there was never any money. Then Semyon-warrior went to his estate to collect his revenues. And the steward said to him:

"There is nothing to be got. We have neither cattle

nor chattels; neither horses, nor cows, nor plows, nor harrows; all these things must be provided, and then there will be revenues."

Then Semyon-warrior went to his father. "You are rich, father," says he; "but you have given me nothing. Portion off to me a third part, and I will transfer it to my estate."

And the old man said: "You have brought nothing into my house, for which I should give you a third part of my property. That would be a wrong to Ivan and the dumb girl."

But Semyon says: "Why, he is a fool, and she is a long-eared dumb girl. They need nothing."

And the old man says: "It shall be as Ivan says."

Then Ivan says: "Well, never mind, let him have it."

Semyon-warrior took his portion from the house, transported it to his own estate, and set off again to serve the Tzar.

Taras-big-belly had also amassed much money, and had married a maiden of the merchant class; but all this was not enough for him. He came to his father and says: "Portion off to me my share."

But the old man was unwilling to give Taras his share.

"You," says he, "have given us nothing, and what there is in the house Ivan has earned. It is impossible to injure him and the maiden."

But Taras says: "What does he want with it? He is a fool; he cannot marry, no one will have him, and no one wants the dumb girl, either. Give me half the grain, Ivan," says he. "I will not take the tools, and of the beasts I will take only the iron-gray stallion, since he is of no use to you in plowing."

Ivan began to laugh.

"Well, it's no matter," says he, "I will begin over again."

So Taras's share was portioned off to him. Taras carried the grain to the town, led off the iron-gray horse, and Ivan was left with one aged mare to till the soil as before, and to support his father and mother.

II.

The old Devil was vexed because the brothers had not quarreled over the partition, but had parted in amity. So he summoned three little devils.

"There, you see," says he, "live three brothers—Semyon-warrior, Taras-big-belly, and Ivan-fool. It is necessary that they should all be thoroughly embroiled; but they dwell in peace, they receive each other with hospitality. That fool has ruined the whole business for me. Do you three go and attack those three, and throw them into such confusion that they will tear each other's eyes out. Can you effect this?"

"We can," they reply.

"And how will you manage it?"

"We will manage it thus," they reply. "We will ruin them in the first place, so that they will have nothing to eat, and then we will fling them into a heap, and they will kill each other."

"Very good," says he; "I see that you understand your business. Go, and do not return to me until you have confounded all three."

The imps all repaired to a morass, and began to take counsel together as to how they should set to work. They cast their lots, and appointed an hour when they should meet in the morass again, to learn who had succeeded and to whose assistance they must betake themselves.

The appointed hour arrived, and the little imps assembled in the marsh, according to their compact. They began to discuss their affairs. The first imp, who came from Semyon-warrior, began his tale:

"My affairs are going on famously," says he. "To-morrow," says he, "my Semyon will go to his father."

Then the second imp, who came from Taras, began the tale of his deeds: "I need no help," says he. "My affairs have also progressed favorably. Taras has loaded many a debt upon his neck, and has involved himself to such an extent that he cannot extricate himself. In another week the day of settlement will arrive, and I

shall convert all his wares into rubbish. He will not be able to pay his debts, and he will go to his father."

Then they began to question the third imp, who came from Ivan. "And how does your business go on?"

"Well, now," says he, "my business is not going at all. In the first place, I spat in his jug of kvas, in order to make his stomach ache, and then I went to his field and pressed down the soil until it was like a stone, so that he could do nothing with it. I thought that he would not plow it; but he is a fool, and so he came with his plow and began to work away. He groaned with pain, but finished the whole of the plowing himself. I broke one plowshare for him; he went home and fitted another, bound on some new foot-cloths, and set to work again at his plowing. I crawled under the earth and clung to the plowshare, but it was utterly impossible to hold on, for he bent himself to the plow and the share was sharp; it cut my hands all to pieces. He plowed over nearly the whole field, and left only one strip. Come, brothers," says he, "help me; for if we do not conquer him, all our labors will be in vain. If the fool remains, and continues to till the soil, they will not know want, and he will support his two brothers."

Semyon-warrior's imp promised to come to his assistance on the morrow, and thereupon the little devils parted.

III.

Ivan had plowed all the fallow field, and only one strip remained. He went out to finish. His stomach ached; but the plowing must needs be finished. He flourished the reins, turned the plow over, and went to work. He had made only one turn, and was coming back when the plow seemed to catch on a root, and he pulled it. But it was the little imp, who had wound his legs around the plowshare and was holding on. "What marvel is this!" thinks Ivan. "There were no roots here, but still, this is a root." Ivan thrust his hand into the furrow, felt about, and found something soft; he grasped this something, and drew it forth. It

is black like a root, but there is something moving on the root. Behold! it is a little live devil. "Ugh, you abomination!" says he. Ivan burst into a laugh, and was about to dash the thing's brains out, but the imp set up a whine. "Don't kill me," says he, "and I will do anything you please."

"What will you do for me?"

"Only mention what you wish."

Ivan scratched his head. "I have a pain in my stomach," says he; "can you cure that?"

"That I can," says he.

"Well, then, cure me."

The little devil bent down to the furrow, scraped with his claws, and scratched out a small root, a triple root, and gave it to Ivan.

"There," says he, "if any one swallows one of these little roots, every pain will disappear."

Ivan took it, broke off one rootlet, and swallowed it. His stomach-ache instantly vanished.

Then the little devil besought him again. "Let me go now," says he; "I will leap through the earth, and I will never come back again."

"Well, all right," says Ivan; "God be with thee!" And as soon as Ivan had mentioned God the little imp dived headlong into the earth, like a stone in water, and nothing but a hole remained. Ivan thrust the two remaining roots into his cap, and set about finishing his plowing. He plowed the strip of land to the end, turned his plow over, and went home. He unharnessed the horse, and went to the cottage, and there he found his elder brother Semyon-warrior, sitting at supper with his wife. He had been deprived of his estates, had escaped by main force from prison, and had fled home to dwell with his father.

When Semyon beheld Ivan: "I have come to live with you," says he; "feed me and my wife, until a new place turns up."

"Well, all right," says Ivan; "you may live here."

But when Ivan tried to seat himself on the bench, the smell which proceeded from Ivan did not please the

fine lady, and she says to her husband: "I cannot," says she, "sup in company with an ill-smelling person."

And Semyon-warrior says: "My lady says that you do not smell good. You ought to eat in the anteroom."

"Well, all right," says he. "It is time for me to go to bed, and I have to feed the mare."

Ivan took his bread and his caftan, and went to bed.

IV.

That night Semyon-warrior's devil left him and went to seek Ivan's devil, according to their agreement, and to help him ensnare the fool. He came to the fallow field; he sought and sought his comrade; the latter was nowhere, and he found nothing but a hole.

"Well," he thinks, "it is evident that a catastrophe has overtaken my comrade, and I must put myself in his place. The fallow field has been thoroughly plowed; that fool must be entrapped at his mowing."

The little devil went to the meadow, and sent an inundation over Ivan's grass; the whole crop was matted together with mud. Ivan turned out of his bed at dawn, whetted his scythe, and went to mow his meadow. The little imp bothered and impeded him in every possible way, but Ivan persevered and finally gave a flourish with his scythe which cut off half the little devil's tail. Then he finished his mowing, ordered the girl to do the raking, and proceeded himself to cut the rye.

He went out with his reaping-hook, but the bob-tailed devil had been there before him, and had tangled the rye so that it would not yield to the hook. Ivan turned round, grasped his sickle, and went to reaping. He reaped the whole of the rye. "Come now," says he, "I must set to work at the oats." The bob-tailed imp heard this. He thinks: "I did not trap him with the rye, but I'll catch him over the oats. Only wait until to-morrow." The next morning the imp ran to the field of oats, but the oats were already cut. Ivan had reaped during the night, in order that less might be shaken out. The little devil flew into a rage: "That fool has cut me and tortured me," says he. "Such a

disaster I have never beheld, even in war. That cursed fellow never sleeps, and is not to be caught. I will go now," says he, "to the grain-ricks, and rot the whole of them for him."

So the imp went to the rick of rye, crept among the sheaves, and they began to rot; he heated them, warmed himself and fell into a drowsy state.

But Ivan harnessed the mare and went with the maiden to draw the rye home. He came to the rick and began to toss it upon the cart; he had flung on two sheaves, when he gave a thrust, and behold! on his pitchfork was a live imp, and a bob-tailed one at that.

"Eh, so it's you, you rascal! Are you here again?"

"I," says he, "am another. That one was my brother. But I have been with your brother Semyon."

"Well," says Ivan, "whoever you may be, you shall share your brother's fate." Then he was about to kill him, but the imp begged, "Let me go, and I'll never come here again; but whatever you desire, that I will I do for you."

"Well, what can you do?"

"I can make soldiers out of anything that you wish."

"What are soldiers good for?"

"They can do everything."

"Can play songs?"

"Yes."

"Well, very good," says Ivan. "Make them."

Then said the little devil: "Here; do you take this sheaf of rye, scatter it thickly on the ground, and simply say: 'My slave commands that thou no more a sheaf shall be, but that so many straws as there are in thee, so many soldiers shall there be.'"

Ivan took the sheaf, strewed it on the ground, and spoke as the imp had commanded. And the sheaf sprang up, and turned into soldiers, and the drummer marched in front, and the trumpeter played. Ivan burst into a laugh.

"This," says he, "is a good thing. It will amuse the maiden."

When the little devil had taught Ivan how to make

the soldiers into a sheaf again, he released the little creature, saying as he did so, "God be with you!" and as soon as he mentioned God, the little devil dived under the earth, like a stone in water, and nothing but a hole remained.

Ivan returned home; and there was his other brother, Taras, who was sitting at supper with his wife. Taras had not met his debts, and had fled from his creditors.

"Well, Ivan," says he, "feed me and my wife until I get started again."

"All right," said Ivan. "Live here."

V.

On the night the imp parted from Taras, he went, according to their compact, to help his comrades to attack Ivan the fool. From the signs in the fields he could tell that a disaster had happened to his comrades.

"I must take their place," said he, "and attack that fool."

He found Ivan in the forest, cutting wood, and began to pester him. Poor Ivan was nearly driven frantic, and made but slow progress. At last, however, in felling a great tree, the imp was caught beneath it by his paw. Ivan was astounded. "So it's you, you rascal! Here you are again!"

"No," says he, "I am another. I have been with your brother Taras."

Ivan was going to kill him, but the imp promised, if he only might be spared, to do for Ivan anything that he might wish.

"I," said he, "can make as much money as ever you want."

"All right," said Ivan; "then make it."

The little devil then instructed him how to do it.

"Take oak-leaves from this oak," says he, "and run them between your hands; gold will fall to the ground."

Ivan took some leaves and rubbed them, and gold showered down.

"God be with you," says he; and no sooner had he

mentioned God than the imp dived beneath the earth, like a stone in water, and nothing but a hole remained.

VI.

The eldest brother, Semyon, heard that Ivan had one day made some soldiers for the pleasure of the villagers.

"Reveal to me," says he the next morning, "whence you got those soldiers, and whither you led them."

"What do you want of them?"

"What? With soldiers one can do anything. A kingdom can be won."

Ivan accordingly created an army for him. "But," said he, "you must lead them away, or they will devour the whole village in one day."

This Semyon did, and set off to make war.

Taras also found out that Ivan had one day made gold for the amusement of the villagers. He therefore begged Ivan to make him a cartload of it. This Ivan did, and both of the brothers became Tzars and rich.

VII.

But Ivan lived at home, maintaining his father and mother, and the dumb maiden, and toiling in the field.

One day Ivan's aged watch-dog became mangy, and Ivan, with one of the little roots which the imp had given him, cured the animal instantly.

It chanced at that time that the Tzar's daughter fell sick, and the Tzar proclaimed that whoever should heal her should receive a guerdon; and if he were unmarried, then he should receive also his daughter in marriage. Ivan accordingly made ready to go, and no sooner had he set foot on the palace porch than the Tzar's daughter was made whole.

The Tzar rejoiced greatly, and commanded Ivan to be brought to him. Then he clothed him, and arrayed him in fine raiment. "Be my son-in-law," says he.

"Very good," says Ivan. And Ivan married the Princess. And soon after that, the Tzar died. And Ivan became Tzar. So all three of the brothers had become Tzars.

The three brothers lived on and reigned, but before long Ivan's idleness became intolerable to him; he began to grow fat, and sleep and appetite forsook him. He accordingly took off all his royal garments and gave them to his wife to hide in a chest, and he put on again his hempen blouse and his trousers, and wound his foot-cloths about his feet, and betook himself to work.

Then he brought his father and mother and the dumb girl, and began to toil once more.

And they say to him: "But surely you are a Tzar."

"Well, that makes no difference," says he; "even a Tzar must eat."

The Minister came to him and says: "We have no money," says he, "to pay wages."

"Never mind," says Ivan. "If you have none, then don't pay."

"But," says he, "then they won't serve."

"That's all right," says Ivan. "They need not serve if they don't want to. They will be the freer to work."

Men came to Ivan, that he might judge between them. One says: "He has stolen money from me."

But Ivan says: "Well, what of that; he needed it."

Then all knew that Ivan was a fool. And his wife says to him: "People are saying that you are a fool."

"All right," says he.

Then Ivan's wife thought and thought, and she became a fool herself. "Why," says she, "should I oppose my husband? Where the needle is there the thread should be." She took off her royal attire, laid it in the chest, and went to the dumb maiden to learn how to work. When she had learned how to work she helped her husband.

And all the sensible people departed from Ivan's kingdom, and only fools remained. And no one had any money. They lived, and labored, and fed themselves and all good people.

VIII.

The old Devil waited and waited for news from his little imps, as to how they had set the three brothers by

the ears; and there came no news whatever. He set out himself to make inquiries, and searched and searched. He found nothing anywhere, except three holes. "Well," thinks he, "evidently they did not overcome them. I must undertake the job myself."

He accordingly hunted out Semyon and Taras and succeeded in ruining them, so that each was obliged to flee for his life from his own dominions.

Then the old Devil went to Ivan, and tried to persuade him to set up an army; but Ivan and his fools refused to become soldiers.

The old Devil sees that his scheme will not succeed. He went to the Tzar of Tarakan, and disguised himself.

"Let us go to war," says he; "we will fight against the Tzar Ivan. He has no money, but he has grain and cattle and every sort of property in abundance."

So the Tzar of Tarakan went to war. He collected a vast army, he provided guns and cannon, and crossed the frontier, and began to march into Ivan's kingdom.

They came to Ivan, and say to him: "The Tzar of Tarakan is coming to make war upon us."

"All right," says he; "let him come."

The Tzar of Tarakan crossed the frontier with his army, and sent forward scouts to spy out Ivan's army. They searched and searched, and there was no army. He waited and waited, to see whether one would not make its appearance somewhere; but there was not even a sign of an army with which to fight. The Tzar of Tarakan sent to seize the villages. When the soldiers came to a village, out ran the fools, men and women, and stared at the soldiers in amazement. The soldiers begin to despoil the fools of their grain and cattle, and the fools surrender them, and no one offers resistance. The soldiers went to another village, and there it is the same. The soldiers marched one day, they marched a second; everywhere it was the same; the people yielded everything, no one offered any resistance, and they invited the soldiers to come and live among them.

"If life is evil in your land, my dear fellows," they said, "come and live with us altogether."

The soldiers marched and marched; there is no army; but the whole nation lives, sustains itself, and feeds others, and resists not, but invites the invaders to live among them.

The soldiers grew tired of this, and returned to their Tzar of Tarakan. "We cannot make war," they say; "lead us away to some other region. War itself would be well enough, but this is like cutting *kissel.** We can war no more!"

The Tzar of Tarakan flew into a rage, and ordered the soldiers to march over the entire realm, to devastate villages, to burn houses and grain, and to slay the cattle. "If you do not obey my commands," says he, "I'll behead every one of you," says he.

The soldiers were alarmed, and began to carry out their Tzar's commands. They began to burn houses and grain, and to slay the cattle. Still the fools did not defend themselves, but simply wept. The old men cried, and the old women cried, and the little children cried.

"Why do you injure us?" they say. "Why do you destroy our goods without cause? If you want them, it would be better for you to take them."

And it became intolerable to the soldiers. They proceeded no further, and the whole army dispersed.

XI.

Thus was the old Devil discomfited—he had not entrapped Ivan with soldiers.

Then the old Devil transformed himself into a real gentleman, and came to live in Ivan's kingdom, and attempted to entrap him with money, as he had entrapped Taras-big-belly. "I want to do good to you," says he, "and to teach you wisdom. I," says he, "will build a house, and establish factories among you."

"Very good," they say. "Do as you please."

The real gentleman passed the night, and in the morning he went forth into the public square, bearing

*A sort of blanc-mange flavored with cranberry or other acid juice or fruit.

a great bag of gold and a sheet of paper, and says: "You all live like hogs," says he. "I am going to teach you how to live. Build me a house according to these plans," says he. "You shall do the work, and I will show you how, and I will pay you in gold pieces," and he showed them the money. The fools marveled, for there was no money in circulation among them; but they bartered one article for another among themselves, and so paid for service. They marveled at the gold.

"The coins are beautiful," they say, and they began to barter their goods and their labor with the gentleman for gold-pieces. The old Devil began to issue gold as he had done with Taras, and they began to exchange every sort of thing and every sort of service for his gold. The old Devil rejoiced, and he thinks: "My enterprise is succeeding. Now I shall ruin this fool, as I did Taras, and buy him, soul and body." But no sooner had the fools received his gold pieces than they distributed them to all the women for necklaces, and all the maidens wove them into their braids of hair, and the children in the street began to play with the pieces. Every one had a great many, and so they stopped taking any more.

"We don't want it," said they; "we have no debts, and no taxes—what should we want of money?"

So the old Devil lay down to sleep without his supper.

This matter reached the ears of Ivan the fool. They came to him and ask: "What are we to do? A real gentleman has made his appearance among us; he likes to eat and drink well, he loves to dress clean, but he will not work, and he does not beg for the sake of Christ—he only offers gold-pieces for everything. The people let him have things at first, until they had collected a quantity, but now they will give him nothing more. What are we to do with him? He has nearly died of hunger."

Ivan heard them out. "Well, at all events," says he, "he must be fed! Let him wander among your houses like a shepherd."

There was nothing else to be done, and the old Devil

began to wander from house to house. And he came, in turn, to Ivan's house. The old Devil came to dine, and the dumb girl prepared the dinner at Ivan's. Lazy people had often deceived her. Those who did no work came early to dinner, and devoured all the groats. So the dumb girl had grown crafty, and judged them by the joints of their hands; whoever had callouses on his hands, she seated at the table, and to those who had none she gave the scraps. The old Devil crept up to the table, but the dumb girl seized him by the hands and looked at them; there were no hard spots; his hands were clean and smooth, and the nails were long. The dumb girl uttered a roar, and dragged him away from the table.

But Ivan's wife says to him: "Be not harsh, you real gentleman; my sister-in-law admits no one to the table who has not callouses on his hands. Wait a while until the people have finished their dinner, and then you can eat your fill of what remains."

The old Devil was angry because they wanted to feed him with the pigs at the Tzar's house. He says to Ivan: "You have a foolish law in your kingdom—that all the people shall work with their hands," says he; "you have invented that through your folly. As if people worked with their hands alone! Do you know with what sensible people work?"

And Ivan says: "How should we fools know? We always toil with our hands and our bended backs."

"That is because you are fools. But I," says he, "will teach you how to work with your heads; then you will find out that you can work faster with your heads than with your hands."

Ivan marveled. "Well," says he, "it is not without reason that you call us fools."

Then the old Devil began to say: "But it is not easy," says he, "to work with your head. Now, here you won't give me anything to eat because I have no callouses on my hands, and you are not aware that it is a hundred times harder to work with your head. Sometimes your head cracks."

Ivan became thoughtful. "Why, my dear fellow," says he, "do you torture yourself so? Is it a slight thing to have your head split? It would be better for you to take some lighter work—with your hands and back."

And the Devil says: "I torture myself because I am so filled with compassion for you fools. If I did not torture myself, you would remain fools forever. But I have toiled with my head, and now I am going to teach you how."

Ivan was amazed. "Teach us," says he; "but some time or other, you had better get your hands in training, so that you can relieve your head with them."

And the Devil promised to instruct them.

And Ivan proclaimed throughout the whole of his kingdom that a real gentleman had made his appearance, and would teach every one how to labor with his head, and that it was possible to do more work with the head than with the hands, and that they were to come and learn.

In Ivan's kingdom a very lofty tower had been built, and upon it was a perpendicular staircase, and on top a platform. And Ivan conducted the real gentleman thither, in order that he might be in full view.

The gentleman took his stand on the tower, and began to speak. And the fools assembled to watch him. The fools thought that the gentleman was going to demonstrate in action how to work with the head without the hands. But the old Devil taught them in words only, how they might acquire much property without working.

The fools understood nothing of this. They gazed and gazed, and departed to their own affairs.

The old Devil stood one day on the tower, he stood a second day—talking all the while, and he wanted something to eat. But it never occurred to the fools to take any food to him on the tower. They supposed that, if he could work better with his head than with his hands, it would be an easy thing for him to make himself bread with his head also. So the old Devil

stood still another day upon the platform, talking all the while. And the people approached—stared and stared and then went their way.

And Ivan asks: "Well, has the gentleman begun to work with his head, yet?"

"Not yet," they say; "he is only chattering so far."

The old Devil stood yet another day upon the platform, and he began to grow weak; once he staggered, and struck his head against a pillar. A fool beheld this and told Ivan's wife, and Ivan's wife ran to her husband, who was busy tilling the soil.

"Come, see," says she; "they say that the gentleman has begun to work with his head." And Ivan was astonished.

"Well," says he. He turned his horse about, and went to the tower. He comes to the tower, but the old Devil was now quite exhausted with hunger, and he began to stagger about, and to strike his head against the pillars. No sooner had Ivan arrived than the Devil stumbled, and thundered down the staircase, banging his head as he went; he counted every step with a blow.

"Well now," says Ivan, "the real gentleman told the truth, that sometimes the head gets cracked, but that is not the same thing as callouses; such work must produce bumps on the head." The old Devil tumbled downstairs, and thumped his head on the ground. Ivan was on the point of approaching, to see whether he had done a great deal of work, when all at once the earth yawned, and the old Devil dived through the earth, and nothing but a hole remained.

Ivan scratched his head. "Well, there now!" says he; "what a scamp that was! That was he again."

Ivan is living to this day, and all the people flock to his kingdom, and his brothers have come to him, and he supports them. If any one comes and says: "Give me food," he says: "Well, all right, you can live with us; we have plenty of everything." And there is only one custom in his kingdom: whoever has callouses on his hands may come to the table; but any one who has none must eat the scraps that remain.

Perhaps the solution of this mystery, graphically described by Aug. Ledyard Smith for ROMANCE, may suggest explanations of others which have hitherto baffled investigation.

A STUDY IN CRIMSON.

THE event which I am about to relate, and which is true in every particular and told without exaggeration, occurred in August, early in the eighties. The day had been warm and sultry, and I left my office to go to the house rather earlier than usual. There was no vitality in the air. The leaves of the trees were motionless, not a breath of wind could be felt, and the close, lifeless atmosphere developed in me an unaccountable depression of spirits.

When I arrived at the house, there was not a soul at home. This I knew positively, because as I entered the house by a side-entrance into a large vestibule, from which a winding staircase ascends to the second story, I called up-stairs to my wife and received no answer; then I crossed the library through a short hall into the kitchen to inquire of the servants as to her whereabouts, but they were not there. I went on to the back-stairs and called to them, but there was no answer. I then returned to the library, wondering why they should all be away, leaving the house so exposed, as I noticed that the kitchen door was open and also one of the doors of the back-library opening upon the riverside veranda. However, I sat down by the table, picked up a book, and began to read.

I had been engaged in this way only a few moments, when I was inexpressibly shocked, as you can readily imagine, to see a drop of blood fall upon the page which I was reading, and then another, and then another. At first, I simply stared at them, growing cold with horror and with fear, striving to doubt the evidence of my senses and to assure myself that it was

only an optical illusion. I rubbed my eyes, in order to remove any speck or film that might have produced these shadows, when I felt the warm blood on my forehead and trickling down upon my hand. Warm it was, and blood, blood without doubt. This evidence completely shattered my hopes that the blood was an illusion, and with this certainty at once all the ghastly, horrible possibilities of its explanation flooded my brain and made me almost faint. For four or five seconds, possibly longer, the blood dropping, now here, now there, both felt and seen, I could not raise my eyes to the ceiling to confirm the suspicion that my tightening heart-strings and excited brain had already shaped. By a desperate effort of the will I succeeded at last in raising my eyes slowly through the arc from the floor to the book-cases, up the book-cases to the ceiling, and backward along the ceiling to the point over my head. If I had not stared before, I stared now, for there was not a spot or blemish or the slightest speck of discoloration to account for this descent of blood. My first sensation was of intense relief, but blood was in the air all about me. What did it mean? The chill, damp moisture that had covered my body before now dried up with the intense heat that my excited condition produced. I was hot. I was frantic. I jumped up from my chair and faced the mirror over the fireplace that was but a few steps away, and I could see one, two, three drops of blood slowly trickling down along the shining surface. I could see my own pale face streaked with blood, my eyes starting from their sockets. I could not look longer and maintain my reason. I was in the midst of a horror too terrible to endure. I ran around the table to the door of the hall leading into the kitchen, but before I could reach it, the blood-drops were already marking its panels. I opened the door, but I felt that I was gradually losing my senses, though I was praying all the while to retain them. I was dazed, however, for I only looked out; then returned and shut the door and rushed across the room, intending to go into the dining-room, my eyes noting the drops of blood

on the hard-wood floor and the fresh ones which were making their appearance at every step. As I put my hand on the knob of the dining-room door to open it, there appeared, low down on the frescoed wall of the partition close to it, a very arc of blood that sent down little drippings, almost a reproduction in red of the pictures of Nova Zembla with its northern lights that we used to see in our geographies. I looked at it an instant, and then I burst into a loud, long laugh—not, I thank God, the laugh of a maniac, but it would have been had I not, with the little reason left me, seen in this arc of blood a complete solution of the mystery.

In my mad rush around the room my little spaniel had been backing his way before me, and as I pushed him, still going backward, to the dining-room door, his wagging tail had described that arc on this partition. The tip of that wagging tail had been cut off or bitten off and was bleeding freely. He had probably been standing by me while I was reading, and wagging his tail and flirting the blood here and there on my book and on my face.

I have often thought that, if in my insane career into the kitchen the dog had not returned with me to the dining-room, but had gone on out of doors, this mystery would have never been solved; and though I might have produced the book with the drops of blood on its pages and pointed to the mirror and the door-panels and the floor, and exhibited the stains on my face and hands, I should have had no believer in this five minutes' shower of blood which descended from nowhere. Its consequences on myself, in that event, I dare not contemplate.

Some idea of the demoralization which must result from the keeping up of a great standing army can be gained from this exciting story by Alexander Pouchkine, translated from the Russian for *Tinsley's Magazine*. Much is said concerning the expense of our own great army of pensioners, an expense greater yearly than that of any standing army that ever was known ; but at least most of our pensioners are kept out of mischief, and in the attitude of producers, by some sort of daily occupation, an invaluable safeguard against the growth of evil passions. Pouchkine, though gloomy enough when he likes, is not of so hopeless and stern a nature as many of the Russian writers, while he retains the faculty which most of them possess, of deeply arousing and interesting the reader.

THE CRACK SHOT.

I.

IN COUNTRY QUARTERS.

THE mir of Piodorskow, in the Government of Suwalki, is a dull hole. We lay there. A monotonous life of it we led—about as full of emotion as that of a tortoise in a state of hibernation. This was the daily routine: morning, drill and the riding-school; midday, dinner at the commandant's or the Jewish restaurant; evening, punch and card-playing. There was not a house in the place worth visiting, nor a girl worth falling in love with. We passed our abundant leisure in going from Peter to Paul, and from Paul to Peter, and back again—the same perpetual round—and in criticising the buttons on each other's uniforms.

Nevertheless, there was just one in our little society who was not a military man. He might be about five-and thirty years old, consequently we "young fellows" looked upon him with something akin to veneration. His experience gave him an ascendency over us; and his taciturnity, his haughty bearing, and the sarcastic manner in which he spoke, added to the impression and strengthened the superiority of age. It was often a puz-

zle to me what mysterious destiny overshadowed him. He appeared to be Russian, but he had a foreign name. He had formerly served in a Hussar regiment, and had even built himself up some reputation in it; but he handed in his papers abruptly one morning—nobody could tell why—and he established himself in this miserable village, where he lived very roughly, but managed all the same to spend a great deal of money. He took his airings on foot, wrapped in a seedy black paletot; but, for all that, he kept open house for every officer in our regiment. To tell the truth, his dinners were not luxurious, nor was the cook a *cordon bleu*. We usually had two or three plain dishes served up by a discharged soldier. But his champagne was of a first-rate brand, and was sent round in bucketfuls. Nobody knew what was his fortune, or whether he was married or single, and nobody cared to ask him. He looked too stern to stand questions of that type. He had a tolerably large library, particularly strong in military books and in romances, which he freely lent and never asked back. On the other hand, he never thought of returning a book once lent to him. His absorbing occupation—it was more than pastime—was pistol-practice. The walls of his dining-room, riddled with bullet dents, looked like a honeycomb. A splendid collection of pistols, of every age and make, was the one vanity of the wretched gazebo he called his mansion. The dexterity he had acquired by his practice was something incredible; if he had laid a bet that he would knock the tuft off a foraging-cap with a shot, I do not think there was a fellow in the regiment who would have hesitated to put that foraging-cap on his head. Sometimes the conversation among us turned upon duelling. Silvio (with your permission, that is how I mean to call him) never took part in it. If he were asked had he ever been out, he dryly answered "Yes," but entered into no details, and it was easy to perceive that the question did not gratify him. We came to the conclusion that some victim of his terrible skill had left a burden on his conscience. None of us for a mo-

ment had the slightest suspicion that there was any element of feebleness in his composition. There are men whose exterior is enough to scout suppositions of the kind. He was one of them. Notwithstanding, an event which unexpectedly occurred astonished all of us.

One day a dozen of us, officers, dined at Silvio's. We drank as it was the custom, that is to say, too much. As soon as dinner was over, we asked the master of the house to make a bank at faro. After refusing for a long time, for he very seldom played, he called for the cards, placed fifty ducats before him on the table, and sat down to cut. We made a ring around him, and the play began. When he played, it was Silvio's habit to preserve an absolute silence; he never made any objections, and never gave any explanations. If a punter won or lost, he paid him exactly what was coming to him, or marked down to his own credit what he had gained. We all knew his peculiarity, and we let him arrange the matter after his own fashion; but there was with us on that occasion an officer newly joined, who, in a moment of distraction, made a false double. Silvio took up the chalk and made his mark in his usual manner. The officer, persuaded that there was a mistake, expostulated. Silvio, never breaking silence, continued to cut. The officer, losing patience, took the brush and rubbed out what he thought to be the wrong mark. Silvio quietly took the chalk and made the mark again. Upon this, the officer—heated by the wine, the play, and the laughter of his comrades—took serious offense, and seizing a copper chandelier in his fury, hurled it at the head of Silvio, who, by a rapid duck, just contrived to avoid being struck. There was a fearful row. Silvio started up, pale with anger, and, with fire in his eyes, he said,

"My good sir, have the kindness to leave the room; and thank your God that this has passed under my roof."

Not one of us had the slightest doubt as to what would be the sequel of the affair. We already looked upon our new comrade as a dead man. The officer left, saying he was ready to give satisfaction to the

banker as soon as it suited his convenience. The gambling continued for a few minutes more, but as we saw that the master of the house took no further interest in the play, we left, one by one, and as we strolled back to our quarters we chatted on the vacancy we were about to have in the regiment.

The following day, in the riding-school, we were asking if the poor Lieutenant were dead or merely wounded, when who should walk in but himself. We plied him with questions. He simply answered that he had not heard from Silvio. We were astonished. We went to visit Silvio; we came upon him in his court-yard, sending bullet after bullet into an ace of hearts nailed to a door. He received us in his usual way, and never said a word about the transaction of the night before. Three days passed, and the Lieutenant still lived. No message had come. We began to ask one another in amazement, "Is it possible that Silvio won't fight?" Silvio did not fight. He was satisfied with a very lame explanation, and all was over.

This magnanimity did him a lot of harm among us young fellows. Want of hardihood is the fault that youth pardons the least. Courage is the greatest of all merits, the excuse for every blemish. Nevertheless, by little and little all was forgotten, and Silvio reassumed his former influence in our circle.

I alone found it hard to reconcile myself to him. Thanks to a romantic imagination, I had grown more attached than any of my friends to this man, whose life was such an enigma. I had made of him the hero of a mysterious drama. He had a preference for me—at least, I was the only one with whom he abandoned his harshness of tone and cynicism of language, and conversed on different subjects with ease, and sometimes with a very happy grace. Since that unfortunate evening the thought that his honor was soiled—that there was a blot on his escutcheon—and that, of his own free will, he had declined to wipe it out, tormented me without ceasing, and drove away my self-possession when I was in his society. I was no longer on the same

terms with him. I made it a matter of conscience to watch his every movement. Silvio had too much penetration not to perceive what I was doing, and to guess the motive of my conduct. He appeared more hurt than vexed at it. Twice I thought I could detect a desire on his part to come to an explanation with me, but I avoided him, and Silvio did not press the matter. From that time I only saw him in company with my comrades. Our cosy intimate chats were dropped.

The lucky dwellers in the capital, tossed about by distracting pleasures, are ignorant of many sensations familiar to those who live in remote villages or small towns; for example, the waiting for the mail-day. On Tuesdays and Fridays the post-office of our regiment was full of officers. One expected money, another letters, a third newspapers. Ordinarily, the packets were unsealed upon the spot; news was passed from mouth to mouth, and the scene in the office was of the most animated description. Silvio's letters were addressed to him at our quarters, and he came to look for them with the rest of us. One day, when he was handed a letter, he broke the seal with great eagerness. As he ran over its contents, his eyes positively burned with a strange fire.

"Gentlemen," exclaimed Silvio, "urgent affairs compel me to leave immediately. As I shall be on the road to-night, I hope you won't refuse to dine with me for the last time. I count upon you," he added, turning to me. "I wish you particularly to come.

Thereupon he retired hastily, and after we had all agreed to make rendezvous at his place, we separated, each his own way.

I got to Silvio's at the appointed hour, and found every officer off duty there. His luggage was already packed up. Nothing was to be seen on the naked walls but the network of bullet-marks. We sat down. Our host was in the best of humors, and his high spirits soon spread to the company. Corks popped brisk as skirmishing fire; the beady froth mounted in the glasses, which were filled and emptied without interruption. We

grew tender-hearted—maudlin, if you like—and wished god-speed, safe journey, joy, and all kinds of prosperity to our departing host.

It was late when we quitted the festive board. When we were looking for our caps, Silvio bade each of us adieu; but he caught me by the hand and held me as I was on the point of going out.

"Stay," he said, in an undertone. "I want to have a few words with you."

I stopped behind.

II.

SILVIO'S EXPLANATION.

The others had departed, and we were left alone, seated face to face, smoking our pipes in silence. Silvio had a careworn air. There was not the slightest trace on his features of his convulsive gayety. His sinister pallor, his blazing eyes, the long curls of smoke which he puffed from his mouth, gave him the aspect of a veritable demon. At the end of a few minutes he broke the silence. "It is possible," he said to me, "that we may never see each other again. Before separating, I wish to have a few words with you. You may have remarked that I care little for the opinion of the indifferent; but I have a liking for you, and I feel that it would cost me a pang to leave you with an unfavorable opinion of me."

He paused to knock the ashes off the top of his pipe. I said nothing, but turned my gaze to the floor and waited.

"It must have appeared singular to you," he continued, "that I did not exact fuller satisfaction from that drunken fool of a Lieutenant. You will agree that, having the choice of weapons, the idiot's life was in my power, and that I ran no very great risk. I might speak of my moderation as generosity; but I do not wish to lie. If I could have administered a correction to the fellow without hazarding my life—mark me, without hazarding it in the least—he would not have got out of my clutches so easily."

I looked at Silvio with surprise. An avowal like this mystified and pained me. He resumed:

"Unfortunately, I have not the right to expose myself to death. Six years ago I got a box on the ear, and my enemy is still living."

My curiosity was vividly stirred.

"And you did not fight him?" I demanded. Assuredly, some extraordinary circumstances must have prevented the affair from coming off."

"I did fight him," said Silvio quietly, "and here is a souvenir of our meeting."

He rose and drew from a box a cap of red cloth with a gold stripe and gland—a cap of the make of those worn in cavalry undress, such as the French call *bonnet de police*. He put it on his head. It had been penetrated by a bullet about an inch above the temple.

"You know," said Silvio, "that I served in the Hussars. You can see the sort of man I am—a trifle overbearing. I have the habit of command; to dominate is an instinct of my nature. In my earlier days it was a passion with me. In my time, the roysterers were the *mode*. I was the greatest roysterer and rowdy in the army. All bragged then about getting drunk. I put under the table the famous B. mentioned in the song by D. D., that used to be sung at the mess of the Preobrajenski Guards. Every day there were duels in our corps; every day I played my part as second or principal. My comrades venerated me; the superior officers, who changed every other month, regarded me as a scourge that they could not get rid of. For my own part, I pursued my career of glory tranquilly, or rather tumultuously, until they sent to the regiment a rich young fellow who belonged to a distinguished family. I shall not tell you his name. Never did I meet a luckier dog; his luck was almost insolent. Picture to yourself youth, wit, a fine figure, sprightly spirits, bravery reckless of danger, an honored name, as much money as he wished, and more than he could ever possibly spend, and now try and bring before your mind the effect that his arrival produced among us. I was

nowhere. My sceptre was broken. At the outset, dazzled by my reputation, he sought to make me his friend. But I received his advances coldly, and he paid me off in my own coin. Without appearing in the least mortified, he left me to myself. I conceived a mortal grudge against him. His success in the regiment and among the petticoats drove me to desperation. I swore I'd pick a quarrel with him. To my epigrams he retorted with epigrams that always struck me as more piquant and original than mine, and which, I must admit, in any case, were much more lively. He jested; I hated; that made the difference. At last, one day, at a ball at a Polish landed proprietor's, seeing that he was the object of attention from several ladies, especially from the mistress of the house, with whom I had been a pet, I went over to him and whispered some gross and stupid impertinence. He burst into a passion and gave me a box on the ear. We flew to our sabres, the ladies fainted, the guests parted us, and, on the spot, we quitted the chateau to make our preparations for mortal combat.

"Day was breaking. I was at the trysting-ground with my three witnesses, waiting my adversary with a mad impatience. The summer's sun rose, and the heat already began to grill us. I saw him in the distance. He was on foot, in his shirtsleeves, carrying his jacket over his sabre-hilt, and accompanied by a single second. We set out to meet them. As he came nearer to me, I could perceive that in one hand he held his cap, which was full of cherries. Our seconds placed us at twelve paces apart. It was my privilege to fire first, but passion and hatred got so much the better of me that I was afraid I should not be able to keep my wrist steady. In order to gain time to cool down I conceded first fire to him. He refused it. We then determined to settle it by drawing lots. He won, this eternally spoiled child of fortune. He pulled trigger, and pierced my *bonnet de police*. It was my turn now. At last I had his life in my grasp. I scrutinized him with a fierce avidity, trying to catch, in the expression

of his features, at the least, a shade of emotion. No! There he was, under cover of my pistol, and not a twitch in brows or lips, not the symptom of a change of color in his cheeks. He was quietly picking the ripest cherries out of his cap and blowing the stones from his mouth, like a schoolboy, until they almost fell at my feet. This cold-blooded composure made me feel like a devil.

"'What is to be gained,' said I to myself,' by taking this man's life, seeing that he sets such small store by it?"

"An atrocious idea shot across my brain. I let down the hammer of my pistol.

"'It seems,' said I, 'that you're hardly in a mood to die at present. You prefer to breakfast. Take it easy; I have no wish to disturb you.'

"'Don't mix yourself up in my concerns,' he answered, 'but take the trouble of firing, pray. For the matter of that, do as you please. You have always that pistol-shot to your credit; and I shall be at your service whenever you wish to discharge it.' I left with my friends, to whom I said that I did not intend to effect the exchange of shots for the moment. And thus the affair terminated.

"I sent in my resignation, and withdrew to this village. Not a day has passed since then that I have not dreamed of revenge. Now the hour has come!"

Silvio drew from his pocket the letter he had received in the morning and gave it to me to read. Somebody —his lawyer presumably—wrote to him from Moscow that the *person in question* was on the eve of marrying a young and beautiful lady.

"You divine," said Silvio, "who is the *person in question.* I am starting for Moscow. We'll see if he'll face death in the middle of a wedding with the same composure that he did in front of a pound of cherries!"

At these words he rose, threw his cap on the floor, and began striding to and fro like a tiger in a cage. I had listened to him, outwardly impassive, but racked by a thousand contending sentiments.

A servant, entering, announced that the horses had arrived. Silvio shook me warmly by the hand, and we embraced. He jumped into a calèche, in which there were two boxes, the one containing his collection of pistols, the other his luggage. We said adieu once more, and the horses went off at a canter.

III.

THE PERSON IN QUESTION.

Several years passed, when family affairs obliged me to exile myself in a wretched petty hamlet of the volosta of Podjaritzki. Busy though I was with my property, I could not help sighing when I thought of the noisy life, gay and careless, I had led up to that period. In Podjaritzki one did not live—did not exist even; one vegetated. The greatest trouble I had was to accustom myself to pass the evenings of spring and winter in complete solitude. Until the dinner-hour I succeeded in killing time more or less effectually by talking to the starosta, superintending my workmen, inspecting new buildings, and overlooking improvements. But as soon as dusk came on, I was at a perfect loss to know what to do with myself. I could almost repeat by rote the few books I had unearthed in the drawers and in a cockloft. I made my housekeeper, Kirilovna, tell me, over and over again, all the old country tales she recollected. The songs of the peasant-girls made me melancholy. I took to drinking, but that gave me the headache. Yes, I will own it; for a while I was afraid I should become a drunkard through pure spite, the worst of all drunkards, as my own district afforded me only too many proofs. As near neighbors there were but two or three of these distinguished topers, whose conversation consisted principally of yawns and hiccoughs. Solitude was a lesser evil than their companionship. At last I made up my mind to get to bed as early as possible and to dine as late as possible; so that I solved the problem of shortening the evenings and prolonging the days, and I found this plan the best of any.

Four versts from my place was a very fine domain belonging to the Countess B——; but there was nobody there save her steward. The Countess had resided in her château but once—the first year of her wedded life; and then she would not remain there beyond a month. One day, during the second spring of my hermit's existence, I was told that the Countess meant to pass the summer with her husband in the château. The report was correct. They took up their quarters there in the beginning of June.

The arrival of a rich neighbor is an event in rural life. The landed proprietors and their people speak of it for two months beforehand, and three years afterward. As for myself, I candidly avow that the announcement of the coming of a young and handsome lady neighbor threw me into considerable agitation. I was dying of impatience to see her; and the first Sunday after their arrival I set out, after dinner, for her château, to present my homage to Madame la Comtesse, in the character of her nearest neighbor and very humble servant.

A lackey ushered me into the Count's study, and went to acquaint his master with my visit. This study was spacious, and furnished in a very rich style. Along the walls were ranged massive presses full of books, and on the top of each a bust in bronze. Over the marble chimney-piece there was an immense mirror. The floor was hidden by a green cloth, upon which were spread Persian carpets. I had been divorced from comfort so long in my den that I was overcome at the spectacle of all this sumptuousness—was positively seized with timidity, and waited for the Count very much in the frame of being of a petitioner from the provinces who has obtained audience of some powerful minister, and sits in an antechamber. The door opened, and gave admission to a young man about thirty, of a charming countenance. He received me in the frankest and most amiable manner. I made an effort to recover my calmness, and was commencing my compliments as a neighbor, when he anticipated me by gracefully telling

me that I should be always welcome to his house while he was there. We seated ourselves. The conversation, full of naturalness and affability, soon soothed my savage timidity, and I began to feel myself in my ordinary groove, when suddenly the Countess appeared, and threw me into an embarrassment greater than before. She was truly a beauty. The Count presented me. I endeavored to assume a free and easy manner, but the more I tried, the more awkward I became. My hosts, in order to give me an opportunity to collect myself and get accustomed to my new acquaintances, began chatting to one another, as if to show me they treated me without ceremony as an estimable neighbor. Meantime, I walked about the study, looking at the books and pictures. I am not much of a connoisseur as far as pictures go, but there was one which riveted my attention. It was a sketch of a valley in Switzerland; but it was not the merit of the landscape which struck me most. I remarked that the canvas was pierced by two bullets, one evidently aimed at the other.

"Ha! that was something like a shot," I cried, turning toward the Count.

"Yes," he said; "rather a singular shot. Are you a good hand at the pistol?" he continued.

"Well, yes—so-so," I answered, delighted at the chance of speaking on a subject I was not wholly ignorant of. "At thirty paces I warrant myself never to miss a card, always provided I know the pistols."

"Really!" said the Countess, with an air of profound interest. Then, addressing her husband, she added: "And you, dearest—do you think you could hit a card at thirty paces?"

"We shall see," replied the Count. "I used not to be a bad shot in my day, but it is four years since I had a pistol in my hand."

"In that case, Count, I don't mind betting that, even at twenty paces, you're not able to hit the spot. The pistol insists on constant practice. I know it by experience. In my regiment I passed for one of the best marksmen. It happened once that I was a month without taking up

a pistol; mine were at the armorer's. We went out for target-practice. What do you think came to pass, Count? I missed a bottle at five-and-twenty paces four consecutive times. We had a squadron-leader in ours —a jolly fellow, but a terrible joker. 'Phew! comrade,' he said, 'you're altogether too sober. You have too much respect for the bottles.' Believe me, Count, if you don't practise, you must rust. The best shot I ever met kept his hand in by firing his pistol every day, if it was only three shots before dinner. He would as soon fail to have his three shots as to take his nip of brandy before soup."

The Count and Countess seemed to take pleasure in hearing me rattle on thus.

"And what sort of shots used he to make?" demanded the Count.

"What sort? Wait till you hear. Suppose he saw a fly creeping on the wall. You laugh, Countess? I swear to you it's true. 'Eh, Kouzka, a pistol.' Kouzka brought him a loaded pistol. Ping! There was the fly flattened upon the wall."

"What skill!" exclaimed the Count. "What was your man's name?

"Silvio, Count."

"Silvio!" exclaimed the Count, springing to his feet. "You knew Silvio!"

"Did I know him? We were the best of friends. He used to mix with our corps as if he were one of ourselves. But it is a good five years since I heard any tidings of him. So, as it appears, he had the honor to be known to you, Count."

"Yes, known, very well known."

"I wonder did he ever tell you a curious story of an adventure that occurred to him once? A story about a box in the ear he got one evening from an animal."

"Did he not tell you the name of the animal?"

"No, he never mentioned it. Pardon, Count," I cried, suspecting the fact, "I was not aware. Am I right in thinking it was you?"

"I am the person in question," answered the Count,

confused in his turn; "and the hole in that picture is a souvenir of our last interview."

"For the love of God, dear, don't speak of it," cried the Countess. "It makes me shudder still."

"No," said the Count. "I must tell the story to this gentleman. He knows I had the misfortune to offend his friend. It is only right he should learn how his friend avenged himself."

The Count motioned me to an arm-chair, and I listened with the liveliest curiosity to the following recital:

IV.

THE COUNT'S STORY.

"Five years ago I got married. I spent the honey-moon here, in this château. To this old building are attached recollections of the happiest hours of my life, and likewise of one of the most fearful and afflicting.

"One evening we went out riding. My wife's horse began to shy and rear; she was somewhat alarmed, and dismounted, asking me to lead him home by the bridle, while she regained the château on foot. At the gate I found a post-calèche. I was informed there was a strange gentleman in my study, who had refused to give his name, but said he wanted to see me on very serious private business. I came into this very room, and in the twilight I could distinguish a man, dust-covered and with a long beard, standing before the chimney. I went up to him, vainly jogging my memory as to where I had seen the face before.

"'You do not recognize me, Count?' he said, in a tremulous voice.

"'Silvio?' I cried; and I confess I could almost believe I felt my hairs standing erect on my head.

"'Precisely,' he added, 'and it is my turn to fire. I have come to discharge my debt. Are you ready?'

"I could see a pistol peeping from his side-pocket. I stepped twelve paces, and I stood there, in that corner, praying him to make haste, and fire before my

wife came back. He was in no hurry, he said; and he asked for lights. They brought him some wax-candles.

"I shut the door, ordered the servants to let nobody enter, and again I called on him to fire. He raised his pistol and took aim at me. . . . I counted the seconds. . . . I thought of *her*. . . . This lasted one awful minute. Silvio lowered his weapon.

"'I am very much annoyed,' he said, 'that my pistol is not charged with—cherry-stones. . . . A bullet is hard. . . . But I have another idea. This business is more like a murder than a duel. I am not accustomed to pull trigger on an unarmed man. Let us begin it all over again, and draw lots for the first fire.'

"My head turned. At first, I imagine, I refused, but finally we loaded another pistol. We rolled two scraps of paper, and he put them into the very cap he had worn when I sent a bullet whizzing through it. I dipped into the cap, and I drew the paper marked number one.

"'You have the devil's luck, Count!' he said, with a grin I shall never forget.

"I cannot understand what power took possession of me, or how he succeeded in constraining me; but I did fire, and my bullet lodged in that picture."

The Count pointed with his finger to the canvas traversed by the pistol-shot. His face was red as hot iron. The Countess was whiter than her lace handkerchief. As for me, I could hardly suppress a cry.

"I had fired my shot, therefore," pursued the Count, "and, thanks be to God, I had missed. . . . Then Silvio—how demoniac a visage he had at that moment!—deliberately adjusted his weapon, and leveled the deadly barrel straight between my eyes. Suddenly the door flew open. Macha burst into the room and clasped herself around my neck. Her presence restored me to firmness.

"'My dear,' I said, 'can you not see that we are joking? What a tremor you are in! Go, go, drink a glass of water, and return, and I will introduce you to an old friend and comrade.'

"Macha mistrusted me.

"'Tell me, is this that my husband says true!' she implored of the terrible Silvio. 'Is it true that you are joking?'

"'He is always joking, Countess,' replied Silvio. 'Once, out of pure jest, he gave me a box on the ear; out of pure jest he planted a bullet in my cap; out of pure jest a while ago he missed me with his pistol. Now it is my turn to have my little laugh.'

"At these words he covered me anew under the eyes of my wife. Macha fell at his feet.

"'Rise, Macha! Are you not ashamed of yourself?' I shouted with rage. 'And you, sir, do you wish to drive an unfortunate woman delirious? Will you fire? Yes or no?'

"'I do not care to now, thank you. I am satisfied. I have enjoyed your suffering and your weakness. I have compelled you to fire upon me. You will recollect me. I leave you to your conscience.'

"He made a step toward the door, and, halting at the threshold, he threw a quick glance at the perforated picture, and almost without troubling to take aim, he fired, doubled my bullet, and walked out. My wife swooned. My domestics did not dare to bar his passage, but retreated before him, appalled. He reached the entrance-steps, called his postilion, and before I had time to recover my presence of mind, he had disappeared."

The Count had told his story.

Thus I learned the end of an episode, the beginning of which had puzzled me. I never saw the hero of it again. They say that Silvio joined the insurrection of Alexandre Ypsilanti, and was slain at the head of a band of partisans at the disaster of Skouliani.

After the strenuous literary treatment of the Russians, the light and merry touch with which the following little story is told, is grateful. It has been written for ROMANCE by Caroline A. Creevey.

A TALE OF A BROOM.

My good aunt stood, with the broom in her hand, at the parlor door.

A fit of generous activity seized me.

"O Aunt Kitty, do let me sweep. You don't know how beautifully I can 'fix up' a room. Besides, I am dying for want of exercise."

Aunt Kitty looked as if struck by a small torpedo.

"Dear aunt, have you not heard of Hercules's sweeping the Augean stables in one day? They contained three thousand head of cattle, which hadn't had any clean straw for thirty years. Well, I dare say he began with his mother's parlor, and trained his muscles thus." I caught the broom and performed a series of gymnastics, throwing it back of my head, and twisting my neck in and out of the loop, till the shade of the student-lamp began to tremble.

My aunt yielded with many cautions. "Don't break anything, but move out the furniture, and sweep the corners, and shake the table-cover and the rug; and don't lift the broom high so as to make a big dust."

"Enough, madam, my aunt. You will soon see how accomplished in such matters I am. Wait a minute. Even at such a trying time, æsthetics must not be forgotten."

I ran up-stairs and reappeared with my hair done up in a white mull fichu, fastened at the side with a bunch of mignonette; my dress skirt pinned back, and covered with a large muslin apron, trimmed with red bows.

"Beauty and the Broom," said I, as I saw my black eyes and dark cheeks under the soft white turban, in the small mirror. "Grace Brown, I have seen you with

less becoming surroundings. Now, aunt, exit, please. The curtain rises upon the first act."

My aunt well knew that rambling in the woods after flowers and insects was my delight, and that I regarded housework as a necessary evil, which, like duties in a custom house, let those shirk who might. I spent weeks in this charming country home every summer, in preference to visiting any of the fashionable resorts, simply because I had enough of fashion the rest of the year—and because I was, with all my shortcomings, Aunt Kitty's favorite niece. Father and I lived all alone; or, rather, he lived with his grain-elevators. He was very good to me. I might go anywhere I liked, or stay at home and invite company. So I joined a Shakspeare Club to improve my mind, and took lessons in free-hand drawing. Of course, I had to go a great deal to the dressmaker's, for a city girl's wardrobe takes time and attention. I had a dog-cart and pony, and I took one of the girls every pleasant day to drive in Central Park. As for housekeeping, we had the best of servants, and I only had to decide whether it should be beef or mutton for dinner. No wonder Aunt Kitty regarded this freak as a new and startling development of my character. But she left me with:

"Don't sweep the dust into the hall, but to the hearth, and——"

I actually kissed her and pushed the dear soul out of the room, and shut the door in her face.

Now I threw open all the windows and blinds. A flood of beautiful sunshine came in. Dark rooms are an invention of the Prince of Darkness—but then folks in the country are awfully attached to them. Never mind, I have all out-doors to live. How lovely those roses are this morning! I climb over the sill to the veranda, and pick a large bunch of Baltimore Belles, which I pin to my throat. A sparrow has her nest in that honeysuckle-vine. Oh, she is sitting, and I will not disturb her. I almost wish I had gone for a walk. "But, Grace Brown, you shall not be fickle. You are going to sweep this room; so climb in again. This

small round table shall be the starting-point. 'A good beginning is work half done.'" The carpet is a modest tapestry. I will take it, one breadth at a time, narrowing ever the horizon of dust and dirt, the hearth my radiating-point, enlarging the area of brightness, till all is clean—when, Enter Dust-Pan, and perform thy menial but useful office!

The table is pretty and quaint, covered with an embroidered cloth that I worked and sent last Christmas. On it lie a handsome piece of coral under glass, some rare and beautiful shells, and an illustrated book, "Poems of the Sea."

Well do I know the sad story enshrined here. Fifteen years ago, Arnold Wood sailed on his last voyage. He was Aunt Kitty's lover, and a fine seaman. But Aunt Kitty would have no sailor for a husband, and he agreed that after one more voyage—he had just been promoted to be second mate—he would settle down to farming. She could not bear that he should go, but he was jubilant. New lands to see—rare and pretty things to bring back to the prettiest bride in town—it was but right that he should have one more taste of the wild, free life; and sadly she let him go. For several weeks letters came regularly. The last was from Calcutta. No one ever heard of that ship again. As months passed, Aunt Kitty grew pale and silent, with a wistful look on her face. People stopped talking when she went by, and said under their breath, "Poor things!" At last she took to her bed with a slow fever. That's what they always call these broken-heart troubles. But she had a strong physique, and did not die, as seemed likely, but after weeks of illness took up the burden of her life again. Well for her, perhaps, that her father was growing too old to look after the farm, and, as he died soon with a stroke of apoplexy, she assumed entire control of the business. Then her mother grew feeble, and they cared for her like an infant. She could only help herself a little by rolling her chair about. On warm days she enjoyed sitting on the veranda, but that was the only change she knew till she took the last long

dreadful journey. Aunt Kitty's success as a farmer is wonderful. The men obey her, or else they go. Her cabbages are the finest, and her chickens the fattest in the neighborhood. She wages relentless persecution upon worms and insects, and it seems as if the things didn't dare to try to eat her cucumber-plants. If the curculio attacks one of her plum-trees, she cuts the tree down before the others suffer. "Better one dead tree than a lot of sickly ones," she says. With an eye, perhaps, to Aunt Kitty's swelling bank-account, a very nice man asked her to marry him. She replied that her life was, indeed, for any who needed her, but for no husband. Her heart, she said, lay at the bottom of the ocean.

Here hang portraits of my great-uncle and aunt, painted before all this happened. I will dust the frames. How stiff and severe Uncle Amos looks! How could the men of those days move their big curly heads at all, yoked in by such immense collars? Her face, dear Aunt Rebekah's, is saintly. She did bear burdens, but all is repose now. There is no anxiety, no suffering in her look, only perfect trust. Her eye gives one courage and strength. Raphael saw a woman like her when he conceived his Sistine Madonna. Aunt Rebekah's hair hangs in one curl behind each ear, and her only ornament is a plain string of gold beads around her neck above the white dress cut round and low. Oh, dear! what would she think of that Nile-green dress with all its lace and spangles, that Madame Furbelow made me for Mary Foster's wedding, last winter? If I keep looking at that saint of an aunt, I shall just go home and send all my dresses to the missionaries. Aunt Kitty is more like her father, energetic and practical. I am glad of it. She scolds me, but she doesn't look at me all day long in that pure, hopeless way that very good people have.

In the table is a small drawer which I ought to open and dust. Ah! the only thing here is a painted ambrotype of Arnold in a blue velvet case. I take it reverently from its folds of tissue paper, and open it. On

the inside cover is pinned a curl of ruddy brown hair. It is a boyish face, laughing, pure, and sweet. Till the last he must have bounded over the crests of life's waves—happy, fearless. If only they could have been married, and had their pretty children around them!

But, Grace Brown, I thought you were sweeping! I push back the drawer, move the table, and ply my broom with vigor.

Here are some dry leaves and flowers, dropped in the shadow of the door. They are botanical specimens which the doctor and I were studying last night. We found a purple Gerardia, yellow Trefoil, and Polygala along the roadside, on our drive. We examined them through the doctor's big microscope. That Polygala was hard studying, and there he sat, enjoying my poking with his needles, trying to count stamens and cells too small almost to be seen with the microscope. He would not help one bit, and I felt more and more stupid. He says I will make a fair botanist if I persevere. The doctor knows everything about plants, but then he had to learn, so as to dispense sarsaparilla, and all his other vegetable stuffs. Botanical names do so dignify medicines! Now I should hate to get well of a fever on Monkshood or one of the Deadly Nightshades. But call them Aconitum and Belladonna, and I shouldn't mind in the least. Out here, where I have so few companions, the Doctor is very agreeable. He began practising in New York, but it was up-hill work. So when the old physician of this place wanted to retire, and invited this young doctor to take his practice, he was glad to come. Some of his patients live off quite a distance, and he says I may as well enjoy the ride with him on fine days. He calls, quite unprofessionally, of course, on Aunt Kitty very often. But, come—my little dried up Gerardia, you and the rest must share a common fate, and go to the dust-heap.

A few white hairs are caught on the broom. I take one gently off and draw it through my fingers. Aunt Kitty's hair turned white in the fever. I love white hairs. The mixed stage suggests the struggle between

youth and age; but the hair softened and whitened at last means the triumph of wisdom, purity, and peace over irritability, passion, vanity, ambition, and those other tempestuous attributes of youth and middle age. I cannot associate white hair with any but good people like Aunt Rebekah and Aunt Kitty. The bad ought to use dyes and keep their locks, like their hearts, a dirty yellow-black.

I have come to the what-not, and I regard it with dismay. What not, indeed! Heaps of knick-knacks, shells, vases, daguerreotypes, picture cards, boxes, small china figures, all waiting to be dusted. On the top shelf peacock feathers and dried grasses wave from an antique vase. Here is my mother's picture in a small frame made of pine-cones. There are hair flowers under a glass. Do let us look at these ancient daguerrotypes. This is Uncle Amos, more solemn even than his portrait. That is father's cousin Sebastian who lives in Australia, and sends me something rare and pretty every Christmas. I have never seen him, but he thought a great deal of mother, who died when I was four years old. It is for her sake, I suppose, that he sends me things. Here is a group of my own cousins, five light-haired, pretty, delicate children. Only one lives now. Their mother died of consumption, leaving a baby three months old. Uncle John, a brother of my father's and Aunt Kitty's, knew a Massachusetts girl, strong and sweet-tempered, who was teaching school. He went to her and said:

"You were my wife's best friend. Her children have her constitution. You know their doom. Come and make their short lives happy. *She* would be pleased. I will give you money and a home. All your wants shall be gratified. And for the care you give my children our gratitude will be your recompense."

She went, and took up her task, determined to conquer those fatal seeds of death which were the mother's heritage. She struggled, and did indeed give them happiness, but she could not give them health. What a fearful fact heredity is! They lived from sixteen to

twenty years, then one by one they drooped and died. All but one breathed his last in her arms. He, singularly, escaped. As a forlorn hope, he was sent as common seaman on a sailing-vessel. Being weak and unused to climbing, he fell to the deck and broke his hip. He was taken to the hospital, where he lay for a year, his wound suppurating and refusing to heal. When he did recover, he walked with a crutch, but the blood taint was gone, and his lungs were sound. He married and lives in St. Louis. Here is a photograph of Charley, Junior, a mischievous, sturdy-looking three-year-old, booked for a long life. On one shelf is a curiously carved cup which Cousin Charles did in the hospital. It was one of his ways of passing the time.

When all my poor cousins were laid in Greenwood, my uncle looked at the lady who had spent the best part of her life in his children's sick-room, and saw that she was old before her time. Too late he began to value her life, and hoped by making her his wife to restore some of her lost youth and energy. He took her traveling; physicians saw her; but in spite of all, she gradually settled into a quaint melancholy. She preferred to stay in a darkened room, and moves noiselessly about as if she were tending the sick. Is there a nervous, vital force which those who are ill draw from those who care for them? It seems so in Aunt Mary's case. She may yet recover. My friend the doctor has seen her and gives hope; but it will take time.

The door suddenly opens.

"My stars! what a picture!" says a voice in dismay. This was the picture: Chairs and tables were moved into the middle of the room. Flies and dust divided the airy spaces between them. The former, joyously swarming and buzzing, showed absolute delight over such an unprecedented invitation as this—to Aunt Kitty's best room. The what-not was partly dismantled. Peacock-feathers and dried grasses lay on the floor among a dozen or two daguerreotypes. I, Miss Brown, sat in the midst, while my broom lay on the

centre-table, dangerously near the student-lamp. The dust-pan reposed upon the mantelpiece between Aunt Kitty's Royal Worcester vases. No wonder my aunt was in a state of mind. Her words came in little gasps:

"Child alive! Did I ever see—since I was born? I was an idiot—yes, I was—to think you could sweep a room. You are all right to tell the name of a flower or a butterfly, but if you are fit for a single thing about a house, Grace Brown, I haven't found it out!"

I heard a smothered laugh in the hall, and looking up from my confusion, saw—oh, heavens and earth! the doctor's eyes twinkling with amusement, while his face was red with suppressed mirth.

"My horse and buggy are here, at your service, Miss Brown." (Why didn't I hear him drive up?) "I am going after some pitcher-plant and sun-dew, and you may like to gather some specimens. Since the pitcher-plant grows in a swamp, you might put on your rubbers. Otherwise your present costume is appropriate, as well as charming."

After the ride:

The doctor, that is, Henry, says that I must assume the direction of his household affairs. He will be perfectly disconsolate if I don't. He wants me to be married with lots of white, soft stuff about my head—I will pucker up the veil a little, just to humor him—with rosebuds everywhere on my dress. He said that the picture of that half-swept room, the flies, the dust, myself a poor little, beautiful culprit seated on the floor with things all about me, my irate aunt, and the broom, was one in which lights and shades were exquisitely blended, and one that he can never forget.

It was a good long ride, and we did not once think of the pitcher-plant; but it was very sweet to be thought so much of by such a splendid fellow as my Henry. And as I am to live here all the time, I can get specimens any day. Meanwhile, I will humbly petition Aunt Kitty to give me lessons in housekeeping.

There are few more thrilling stories than those concerning men and women who are believed to be dead when in reality a feeble pulse still beats within them. The following contribution to this sort of literature is from the pen of Wayn Miner, and first saw the light in the *Yankee Blade*.

"WHISTLING WILL."

"Won't you tell me just one more story before tea-time?" I pleaded.

Doctor Rhoades and I were sitting on the piazza at the close of a hot summer day. Although he had been with us only a week, he and I were great friends. I had heard often of him before, but on account of his busy professional life, he had been unable to accept my father's many invitations.

At last, worn out by his work, he was forced to take a rest, and had written that he would be pleased to visit us at our country home.

My father hardly ever told any of his experiences in the army during the war without bringing in "Joe Rhoades," as he called him. Doctor Rhoades had been an assistant surgeon then.

"Well, yes, just one short one," he answered as he looked into my eager face.

"There had been a fearful carnage that day, and the surgeons were very busy. Body after body was brought in, and those that could be helped were sent to the operating room. Those past our help were sent to the deadhouse.

"Late in the afternoon one body was brought in which, even amid that scene, made me tremble. It was that of a brave fellow, a schoolmate of mine, who had enlisted at the very opening of the war. He was a happy-hearted fellow, bright in the darkest hours, and a continual whistler. Before he could be seen, his clear, strong notes were heard, and the men knew that 'Whistling Will' was coming.

"The surgeon examined him and said, 'Well, Bill, you have whistled your last tune,' and hurried to the next. It seemed impossible that we never should hear his cheerful voice again. I noticed that he was not mutilated in any way, and thought that he had probably been killed by a fall from his horse.

"His body was carried to the deadhouse, but—and here comes the strange part—as he was being taken from the room, suddenly and distinctly I heard Bill's familiar whistle, 'Cheer up, comrades, and be gay,' just as it had sounded as he marched to his death that morning. I looked about to see if any one else had noticed it. Every one was absorbed in the confusion and suffering around him. I said nothing.

"About eight o'clock that night the surgeon sent me for some stimulants to the steward. I passed the deadhouse, which was nothing more than a large shed with a door at each end, so that one could pass from one end to the other, between the rows of corpses on each side. As I neared the place, again came the whistle, faintly, in a kind of minor undertone, 'Cheer up, comrades, and be gay.' When I passed the door, I hesitated; somehow I wanted to go in, but remembering that I had been sent on an errand, I passed on; again came the same refrain, each word sounding very distinctly, and apparently right beside my ear. By this time I felt a little queer, but tried to banish my fears by attributing them to overwrought nerves.

"I started on a brisk walk to the surgeon, determined not to be a fool any longer. Two-thirds of the long building were passed, when, hark! the same notes again, still fainter than before. Beads of cold perspiration stood on my forehead when I entered the surgeon's headquarters, but I said nothing.

"I worked incessantly until eleven o'clock, with the memory of that refrain before me all the time. At half-past eleven I threw myself on my cot, which was placed beside a window at the extreme end of a narrow corridor. Thoroughly exhausted, I soon fell asleep. I don't know how long I had lain, when suddenly on

the night-wind came Bill's 'Cheer up, comrades, and be gay.' I jumped up, as if aroused by a trumpet blast.

"The moon had risen full and clear and was pouring her wan light right on my face.

"Instinctively, I put my head out of the window, and from every tree and hill and valley, as if the whole earth were resounding, came the same line, this time in an exultant tone.

"Without a thought, I leaped from the window to the ground which was but a few feet below, and, as wide-awake as I ever was in my life, I went straight to the deadhouse. Now there were no fears. I did not think at all, I only listened. Upon reaching the door, I lighted one of the candles that were lying on a shelf, but it was of little use, the wind made the flame flicker and splutter. With this uncertain light, I passed down the long aisle, between the white-sheeted corpses on either side. I did not know where Will lay, but, without hesitating, I walked up two-thirds of the way and turned down the sheet from the fifth last corpse on the right-hand side.

"It was he, pale, yet looking just as if he were asleep. I stood a moment holding the flickering light above his head, when—good God! I saw his eyelids tremble. I stood as if suddenly turned into stone, then a slight quivering breath and—the lids opened. With a shriek, I dropped the candle and ran out into the air, through the fields to the hospital.

"Upon reaching there, my wits came back. What was I to do? Not call upon the surgeon; no, he would only laugh and tell me my head was turned. Then I thought of the steward. He had been very fond of Will. I would ask him.

"In a short time we stood by Will's side. I was no longer frightened. My professional coolness came to my aid.

"Upon examination I found a very feeble pulse. Stimulants were given, and for two hours, surrounded by our ghostly spectators, we labored. At length we

were rewarded by hearing the words, spoken in a very weak voice, 'Where am I?'

"'All right, old boy,' I answered, as I tried to keep his eyes from seeing the objects about him. Another return of partial unconsciousness enabled us to get him out without his seeing where he was, and in the morning, he found himself in the hospital, very weak, but on the road to recovery.

"In a few months, he was among us again, as bright and as cheery as ever, but he never again whistled, 'Cheer up, comrades, and be gay.' He appeared to have forgotten it."

The doctor finished—it had grown quite dark. After a moment's silence, I said, "It is funny that father never told me this story. Who was this man whose life you saved?"

Just then my father came to the door to tell us that supper was waiting. He stood still as he heard the question. With a peculiar look in his eyes, the doctor pointed to him and said, "That was the man."

This thrilling experience of an American sewing-woman in Russia will go to the heart of every true woman. The origin of the story is unknown.

A RUSSIAN SEWING-WOMAN.

WHAT was I to do? Never was a woman placed in such a pitiable condition. I had been brought to Russia by a New England sewing-machine company to run their machines at an agency of theirs in —— street in St. Petersburg, where a handsome shop had been rented. One blustery cold day toward the close of October I found the shop door closed, and learned to my dismay that our agent had disappeared and the machines had all been seized for rent and debts. What was to be done? All the money I had in the world was about equivalent to $12. What was due me I had left in our agent's hands, and I felt sure it was lost. I thought of everything in the 25 minutes which elapsed between my heart-break when I found the shop door closed and my rapid walk to my lodgings. Fortunately, my room had been hired for the month, and had been paid for in advance. I had at least a roof over my head for a few weeks. An idea suddenly struck me. I had been making an evening dress on the machine for a Russian lady who spoke English. She had some idea of buying a machine. In order to expedite the work, I had taken to my room the body of her dress, and having a machine there, had sewed on it of nights. That machine I would certainly keep; it would not go far toward the payment of the debt the agent owed me. I hurried home. Perhaps there was a letter with some money in it. There was nothing. I must find the lady—but how? She had left no address. She had hardly spoken to me. I thought I heard her say that she would come again, and I believed she had fixed on this very day. There was but

one chance in a thousand. I must stand in the street and wait until she appeared.

I hastened back and took up my position near the shop. I scanned every woman passing by. It was bitterly cold and raw, and the wind chilled me. I was faint with anxiety. Had I only known more of the language, I would have asked a policeman to take me to the American Consul, to the Minister. I was in despair. Suddenly a carriage drove up, a footman opened the door, and a lady elegantly dressed alighted. I tore across the street; it was the Russian lady. With my heart in my mouth, I told her my pitiful story and begged her to help me. If she wanted a servant, would she only try me? I had a sewing-machine, and would make her dresses for nothing if I could only stay with her until I could write to my people at home; they would send me money, and I could get back to the United States. My words must have had but little sense in them, I was so broken-hearted, for at first she hardly seemed to understand me.

"I am without a friend in the world here—a poor American woman, thousands of miles from her home."

She looked steadfastly at me, then opened her porte-monnaie.

"No, no," I said. "I want no money. I cannot beg. I am not yet so poor as to ask alms. But do you not remember me? The store is closed. The man who kept it has run away. I showed you the way the machine was worked."

Then she scanned me quickly; next cross-questioned me sharply.

"How could a young girl trust herself alone in this strange country?" she asked.

"I was not alone. Two other young women came from the United States with me. Two weeks ago they were sent home, and the miserable man in charge induced me to stay, promising to give me money enough at the end of next month for my trip home to the United States. Might not the police look up the matter? I have been outrageously swindled."

"The police? and my dress—am I to lose it?" the lady asked impatiently.

"Not all of it. The skirt is in the shop, the body, the waist, is in my room, almost finished." It seemed to me dreadful that in my agony she should talk about her dress.

"Where do you live?" she inquired abruptly. I told her. "Get into the carriage," she said. I did so. When we were off the main street, she stopped the carriage, got out with me, and we walked to my lodgings. I opened the door. On the table was her basque. It did not seem to interest her. She picked it up, however, glanced at it a moment, then threw it down. She examined the sewing-machine.

"How long would it take me to become proficient in working this?" she inquired as she sat down before the machine and tried the pedals. "Is it fatiguing?"

"No, madam. Oh, would you buy it? It is mine by rights. The money for it might help me to leave St. Petersburg."

"How long did you say it would take me to become proficient?"

"Two weeks—perhaps less."

"Would it disfigure my hands?" She took off her gloves, showed her well-cared-for hands, her fingers glittering with rings.

"Your beautiful hands would hardly be spoiled."

"Well, then, give me a lesson at once—at once. I will pay you for your trouble."

I expressed my gratitude with almost tears in my eyes. "I have no material here—but anything will do," I said, as I opened my trunk and took out an apron. "I will run a tuck across the bottom—it will do no harm."

"Nonsense. Take the waist and begin on that."

"But it is quite finished, and any extra stitching would spoil this delicate cream-colored silk."

"Give it to me," said the lady, taking up her scissors and deliberately cutting the waist up the back.

"Now sew me up this," she cried. I took it and, as

carefully as I could, ran the machine, sewing up an ugly gash, but, of course, the waist was spoiled. "Now I will try," and she sat down and under my instruction worked for an hour. She was wonderfully clever with her fingers, and seemed to seize the peculiarities of the machine at once.

"At this rate of progress, madam, you would become quite a good workwoman in ten days," I said approvingly.

She made no reply, but worked away for another half-hour, crossing and recrossing the body with stitches. "It is not so tiresome after all," she said, "but I have had enough for to-day. To-morrow I will call, and you will then take the machine to pieces and show me how to put it together again. You will oblige me very particularly by not going out to-day. I have to thank you for your patience. Keep my visit silent. I hope you have learned that in Russia it is better to keep a quiet tongue. Do not return to the shop. Pray take this for my first lesson," and she placed on the machine table a piece of gold.

"I am very much overpaid," I said.

"Where are you from? English or American?"

"American, from New Hampshire."

"New Hampshire! Where is that?"

"One of the New England States."

"I never heard of it. You are a good republican, I suppose?"

"I hope so."

"Well, adieu." I felt very much inclined to kiss her. She looked cold and haughty, but my heart was so full of thankfulness that, overcoming somewhat the awe I felt, I ventured to take her hand in mine and put it to my lips. She did not withdraw it. "Poor child," she said; "you do not look more than twenty, and, at your age, to be in such trouble! This must be a hard experience for you. Good-bye, and until to-morrow." She gazed at me steadfastly as if she would look me through, and then, bowing, left me.

I did not, would not, allow myself to be disheartened.

I sat down and wrote two letters—one to my mother, at Amherst, the other to a sewing-machine company, in New York. I explained my pitiful condition.

Next morning early there was a low knock at my door. I opened it, and a woman plainly dressed entered. She did not say a word. She placed a bundle she held in her hand in a chair, and at once went to the machine, took up the bodice, and commenced sewing.

"You will kindly forget the lady of yesterday and know me as Elise simply, or rather, as Elise is French, we will say Eliza. I want to learn your trade. It is a whim of mine. Do you think that in a month I could earn my bread this way? I offer you a partnership. I can find the funds. The contents of the shop will probably be sold out, and you will be able to buy one of the machines for me. Now, will you take this one apart?"

I had not a word to say. I brought a wrench, a screw-driver, an oil-can, and unloosened the working parts of the machine. She took the oil-can and bent over the machine, studying it. I noticed that she touched with her white fingers all the grimy parts, until her hands were soiled.

"It is by no means as complicated as a revolver," she said.

I made no comment as I put the working parts together. She was very silent, working incessantly on some coarse material she had brought with her. I sat near her—teaching her what to do. She worked on until it was past noon. "Is it not time now to eat something?"

"It is," I replied; "would madam partake of my simple meal?"

"Madam! I am Eliza—and you say your name is Mary. Mary, I shall be very glad to share your food with you, if you will let me. If you have not enough for two, I will go out and buy what is wanted. What shall it be? I dare say I can shop better than you. Will you lend me your shawl, your furs, and your overshoes?"

Before I could say a word she had them all on. Then

she laughed for the first time and curtsied to me. "Sister Mary, Sister Mary," she cried in great glee, "our copartnership begins from to-day. I am to be capital and you brains. Little sister, good-bye. I shall not be gone more than a quarter of an hour." I was so astonished as to be speechless. In a trice she was back, loaded down with packages. She had a loaf of bread, a piece of cheese, a pot of preserves, a breast of smoked goose, some salted cucumbers. "I have a samovar, but it was too heavy for me to carry. The man I bought it of will bring it here at once. It is a second-hand one, but as good as new. I see you have a tea-pot. My only two extravagances were some good soap and a pound of the best tea. Come, let us eat. I can arrange anything. I am to wait on you."

Then up came the man with the copper urn and charcoal, and she made the fire and prepared the meal. "We don't drink tea out of cups when we belong to the people, and we are of the people, but swallow it in tumblers." Though I sat down at the little table with her, I ate sparingly, I was so much confused.

"Before I conclude my first day's lesson, Sister Mary, let me ask you something. Did you ever read the 'Arabian Nights'? It is a book I suppose all the world has read."

"It is quite well known in the United States. All children read it, and 'Robinson Crusoe.'"

"So I thought."

"You want me to remember Aladdin?"

"No, not at all. The story I wish you to think about is not half as pleasant. It is about Sindbad the sailor and the old man ape he could not get rid of. You are the sailor, Sister Mary, and I am the ugly old man ape," and she made so comical a grimace that I could not help smiling.

"I assure you that is my character, and you never will get rid of me until you break my head. Sister Mary, will you share your supper with me, your bed with me to-night, your breakfast with me to-morrow; not for that day, but for the next day, and the day after

that?" She said this very quietly as she took my hand in hers. I was at a loss how to reply. "We are to work together for our living—only, Sister Mary, make me proficient. I will be so diligent."

"But, madam."

"No—Sister Eliza."

"Sister Eliza, how is it possible that a lady of means, whose acquaintance I made but yesterday, who awed me with her grand manners and her carriage, should wish to become a sewing-woman?"

"Ask me no questions. This, however, I promise you. The story of the old man ape is partially true, but there is a limit to your endurance. In a month from now, I swear to you, your passage home shall be paid you, and, besides that, there will be given you a handsome sum for you to start life with in your own country; only, for God's sake, remember that, just as you threw yourself on my mercy, I now throw myself on yours. I believe you have character and courage. No harm will come to you. I want a refuge, and have found it. Teach me what you call the tension, how to tighten the band when it slips, how to gauge the stitch, and what to do when the thread breaks."

In a day I learned to love that woman. All the haughty, proud manner was gone. She waited on me. She was the first up in the morning. She was always busy. The porter of the house evidently mistook her for one of the two girls who had been in the employ of the sewing-machine company, for one or the other of them had often been in my room. Some small extra compensation was given him for the new lodger. She never spoke save in English, and her coming to me had been so mysterious that I felt quite certain the porter was entirely ignorant of her condition.

Certainly it worried me a great deal. More than once I ventured to ask for an explanation, but Eliza would place her hand on my mouth so that my speech was interrupted. It distressed me to see how hard she worked, for I felt sure that this new life was hurting her. I could see that from her pallor. If any one thing

more than another made me feel sorry, it was for her beautiful hands. She seemed to take infinite pains in spoiling them. "They are filthy—horrible," she would say, "and still I think I care for them more than I should. If I only could get a thick, red, rough skin on them!"

As she had said, the owner of the store was only too glad to sell me a machine. Eliza furnished the money. Work came to us in a mysterious way—left down-stairs with the porter. By and by a fashionable dress-maker, who made dresses for the Court ladies, sent for me and gave me work. As what we had to do was well sewed, and we were always prompt, in less than three weeks we were doing a good business. My companion, save for the daily purchases made in the immediate neighborhood for food, never went out. No one called on her; she never received a letter.

A few days over the month had passed, when one morning, as I was running up a seam in a piece of cloth, my needle struck something. It was a piece of paper.

"It is for me, Sister Mary," said Eliza. She took the bit of paper, held it to the stove, appeared to read something, and then opened the stove door and burned it. I did not question her. She worked on cheerfully all day, chatting on indifferent subjects.

That night when we were in bed, taking me in her arms, she said: "Poor Mary, your troubles, your anxieties, are now over. To-morrow early apply for your passport. It will cost you to go from here to Liverpool, say, forty pounds, and the passage from Liverpool to the United States as much more; that makes eighty pounds, and you will have something to spare. I wish it could have been more, but you will have altogether three hundred pounds, which, after deducting your traveling expenses, will leave you some money to begin your life with again. From me—who have learned to love a singularly honest and simple-minded woman—you shall have this ring," and she slipped on my finger a ring, "but don't wear it, the diamond might betray me. So far, Mary, you have run no risk, but next week you might be ruined forever, for you have harbored——"

I was speechless with terror.

"Only a woman," she continued, "whose own life—or the life of any one else who stood in her way—she would care no more of taking than would the cook who wrings a chicken's neck. Do not be shocked, Mary. I shall sleep as sweetly to-night as if death did not threaten me. My story, as far as relates to you, is soon told. It became necessary for me a month ago to disappear. The simplest chance in the world threw you in my way. Had you been of any other nationality than an American, I would never have trusted you. You might go out now, Mary, and sell me Judas-like for a sum of money which would make you rich for life."

I clung convulsively to her and bade her be quiet.

"Through my veins, child, there runs the best blood in Russia; but every drop of it I will shed for the cause. Thank your God for your lowly estate. You must go away to-morrow, and now good-night."

I begged her to come to the United States with me. She said: "No, my place is here. I should be useless there." Then she complained of lassitude, and presently went to sleep. I looked at her, her face pillowed on her arm, breathing as calmly as an infant, and thought her the loveliest woman I had ever seen.

Next morning out of a package of some rough material she produced, as if by magic, a roll of notes, which, without counting, she handed to me. "Later in the day there ought to arrive some furs for me, for poor Mary must not get cold. Now, away with you." Her old manner had returned. "Get your passport. Go by Bremen to England, or the ice will delay you. Do not wait." Still I was irresolute. I could not bear to leave her. I sobbed as if my heart would break. Then she knelt to me and implored me to go. At last I consented. My passport was given to me at the Police Headquarters without a word.

I returned to our room. As I stood at the landing, the cheerful clatter of the machine was heard. Eliza was bending over her work, singing some plaintive air.

"Is it all right?" she asked, very quietly. "See, your furs have come. They are very beautiful, and so warm."

"I have permission to leave."

"Thank God! See my work. I think I could do now without you."

"You do not love me, Eliza," I cried.

"Not love you—my sister! I loved my husband—he was shot. I loved my only child; in the agony of my grief because his father was killed, from my breast he sucked poison and died. After them I love you best." Then for the first time she burst into a paroxysm of tears. "It is because I love you—that I might be your death." As she wrung my hand, she felt the ring on my finger. "Off with it. You wore your mittens at the police office! If they had seen it! Quick, let me hide it." She took off my shoe and hid the ring in my stocking. "Should you ever marry, sell the ring, or the stone in it, and you will not be portionless. Now, off with you. I have made a bundle for you. The rest of your things you will give me. Here is a photograph of yours—you will let me keep it? I have been happier here with you than for years." She took me by the hand, gave me one long kiss, closed the door on me, and I never saw her more.

My trip home was without a single incident. My dear mother comforted me. Still, there was some vague feeling of dread. My mind wandered, all I could do, toward my room companion. Picking up a newspaper, some two weeks after my arrival home, I read in the telegraphic dispatches:

ST. PETERSBURG, Dec. 23.—An arrest of great importance has been made. One of the chief actors in the Nihilistic plots, a Russian Princess, was taken, but only after she had killed one of the Police. Disguised as a sewing-machine woman, she had hitherto baffled the Police.

The Boston *Journal* celebrated the 85th anniversary of John G. Whittier's birth by republishing a short story from the poet's pen. It appeared in the old Groton *Herald* of Saturday, August 21, 1830, and is now reproduced, sixty-two years later, as illustrating the early work of the New England poet. It is said that one of the editors of the *Herald* was a native of Haverhill, and young Whittier (then in his 23d year) was a printer. Probably there was a friendship between the two, and on the strength of this acquaintance the future poet offered his manuscript.

HENRY ST. CLAIR.

HENRY ST. CLAIR! How at the mention of that name a thousand dreams of friendship and youth and of the early and beautiful associations which linger like invisible spirits around us, to be called into view by the magical influence of memory, are awakened! How does the glance of retrospection go back to the dim images of the past, from the childish merriment to the manly rivalship, from the banquet hall and the pleasant festival down to the unbroken solitude of the grave.

We were as brothers in childhood—St. Clair and myself—brothers, too, in the dawning of manhood, and a more ingenuous and high-minded friend I never knew. Yet he was strangely proud, not of the world's gifts, wealth, family and learning, but of his intellectual power, of the great gift of mind which he possessed, the ardent and lofty spirit which shone out in his every action. I never knew a finer mind. It was as the embodied spirit of poetry itself—the beautiful home of high and glorious aspiration.

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It was a night of autumn—a cold and starless evening—I remember it with painful distinctness, although year after year has mingled with eternity—that I had occasion to pass, in my way homeward, through one of the darkest and loneliest alleys of my native city. Anxious to reach my dwelling, I was hurrying eagerly for-

ward, when I felt myself suddenly seized by the arm, and a voice close to my ear whispered hoarsely: "Stop, or you are a dead man!"

I turned suddenly. I heard the cocking of a pistol and saw, by a faint gleam from a neighboring window, the tall figure of a man, one hand grasping my left arm and the other holding a weapon at my breast.

I know not what prompted me to resistance: I was totally unarmed, and altogether unacquainted with the struggle of mortal jeopardy. But I did resist, and one instant I saw my assailant in the position I have described, the next he was disarmed and writhing beneath me. It seemed as if an infant's strength could have subdued him.

"Wretch!" I exclaimed, as I held his own pistol to his bosom, "what is your object? Are you a common midnight robber, or bear you aught of private malice toward Roger Allston?"

"Allston! Roger Allston!" repeated the wretch beneath me in a voice which sounded like a shriek, as he struggled half upright even against the threatening pistol. "Great God! has it come to this? Hell has no pang like this meeting! Shoot!" he exclaimed, and there was a dreadful earnestness in his manner which sent the hot blood of indignation cold and icelike to my heart. "Shoot! you were once my friend. In mercy kill me!"

A horrible suspicion flashed over my mind. I felt a sudden sickness at my heart, and the pistol fell from my hand.

"Whoever you may be," I said, "and whatever may have been your motive in attacking me, I would not stain my hands with your blood. Go and repent of your crimes."

"You do not know me," said the robber, as with some difficulty he regained his feet. "Even you have forgotten me. Even you refuse the only mercy which man can now render me, the mercy of death, of utter annihilation!"

Actuated by a sudden and half-defined impulse, I

caught hold of the stranger's arm, and hurried toward the light of a street lamp. It fell full upon his ghastly and death-like features, and on his attenuated form, and his ragged apparel. I pressed my hand against my brow, for I felt my brain whirl like the coming on of the delirium. I could not be mistaken. The guilty wretch before me was the friend of my youth—one whose memory I had cherished as the holiest legacy of the past. It was Henry St. Clair.

. . . . . .

Not many days after, I followed the remains of my unhappy friend to the narrow place appointed for all the living—the damp and cold churchyard. I breathed to no one the secret of his name and his guilt. I left it to slumber with him.

I now referred to the paper which had been handed me by the dying man. With a trembling hand I broke the seal of the envelope and read the following addressed to myself:

"If this letter ever reaches you, do not seek to find its unhappy writer. He is beyond the reach of noble generosity—a guilty and a dying man. I do not seek for life. There is no hope for my future existence, and death, dark and terrible and mysterious as it may seem, is less to be dreaded than the awful realities with which I am surrounded.

. . . . . .

"Amidst the baleful principles which I imbibed, one honorable feeling lingered in my bosom, like a beautiful angel in the companionship of demons. There was one being, a young and lovely creature, at whose shrine all the deep affections of my heart were poured out, in the sincerity of early love. She possessed every advantage of outward beauty, but it was not that which gathered about her, as with a spell, the hearts of all who knew her. It was the light of her beautiful mind which lent the deep witchery of soul to her fine countenance, flashing in her dark eye, and playing like sunshine on her lip, and crossing her fair forehead with an intellectual halo.

"Allston! I look back to that springtime of love, even at this awful crisis in my destiny, with a strange feeling of joy. It is the only green spot in the wilderness of the past, an oasis in the desert of being. She loved me, Allston, and a heart, more precious than the gems of the East, was given up to a wretch unworthy of its slightest regard.

"Hitherto, pride rather than principle had kept me above the lowest degradation of sensual indulgence. But for one fatal error I might have been united to the lovely being of my affections; and, oh! if sinless purity and persuasive love could have had power over a mind darkened and perverted as my own, I might have been reclaimed from the pathway of ruin; I might have been happy.

"But that fatal error came; and came, too, in the abhorrent shape of loathsome drunkenness. I shall never, in time or eternity, forget that scene; it is engraven on my memory in letters of fire. It comes up before me like a terrible dream—but it is a dream of reality. It dashed from my life the cup of happiness, and fixed forever the dark aspect of my destiny.

"I had been very gay, for there were happy spirits around me; and I had drank freely and fearlessly for the first time. There is something horrible in the first sensations of drunkenness. For relief I drank still deeper, and I was a drunkard. I was delirious; I was happy. I left the inebriated assembly, and directed my steps, not to my lodgings, but to the home of her whom I loved and adored above all others. Judge of her surprise and consternation when I entered with a flushed countenance and an unsteady tread! She was reading to her aged parents, when with an idiot's grimace I approached her. She started from her seat—one glance told her the fatal truth, and she shrunk from me; aye, from me, to whom her vows were plighted and her young affections given, with fear, with loathing and undisguised abhorrence. Irritated at her conduct, I approached her rudely and snatched from her the book she had been reading. I cast it into the flames, which

rose brightly from the hearth. It was the volume which you call sacred. I saw the smoke of its consuming go upward like a sacrifice to the demon of intemperance, and there, even there, by that Christian fireside, I cursed the book and its author!

"The scene which followed beggars description. The shriek of my betrothed, her sinking down in a state of insensibility, the tears of maternal anguish, the horror depicted on the countenance of the old man, all these throng even now confusedly over my memory. I staggered to the door. The reception I had met with and the excitement thereby produced had obviated in some measure the effect of intoxication, and reason began to assume its empire. The full, round moon was up to the heavens—and the stars—how fair, how passing beautiful they shone down at that hour! I had loved to look upon the stars, those bright and blessed evidences of a holy and all pervading intelligence; but that night their grandeur and their exceeding purity came like a curse to my weary vision.

"Allston! I have visited, in that tearless agony which mocks at consolation, the grave of my betrothed. She died of a broken heart. From that moment all is dark and hateful and loathsome in my history. I am now reduced to poverty; I am bowing to disease. I am without a friend. I have no longer the means of subsistence, and starvation may yet anticipate the fatal termination of the disease which is preying upon me."

Such was the tale of the once gifted and noble St. Clair. Let the awful lesson it teaches sink deep in the hearts of the young and ardent of spirit. Let them remember that infidelity and intemperance go hand in hand; and those who have once yielded themselves to the fascination of vice are hurried onward, as by an irresistible impulse, in the pathway of ruin, although conscious of their danger and knowing that the gulf of utter darkness is widening and deepening before them.

The sad consequences of giving way to ill-temper are illustrated with unconscious force in this tragic tale of Spanish rage and vengeance. It has been translated for ROMANCE by Mary R. Merton, from a Mexican newspaper, in which it appeared anonymously.

THE MARBLE "LIBERTY."

THE sculptor worked earnestly over the rough mass before him, endeavoring to impart to the abstract entity seen only by the artist's eye, but gradually developing under the artist's hand, the fine proportions and graceful contour of his model. She was a girl whose classic figure and easy, instinctive gracefulness would have made her noticeable anywhere, despite the restrictions of conventional dress; how much more beautiful, then, was she in the flowing robe, such as a goddess might wear, its sweeping lines only interrupted at the waist by a loose girdle. With the balances held aloft in one hand, the other resting on a sword, and lifting to heaven a face which fittingly crowned the whole figure, she seemed a faithful incarnation of human justice.

Among the frequenters of Mèndez's studio was Arnold Brock, a wealthy English dilettante and patron of the arts. He had been enthusiastic over the design of the Justice ever since the somewhat garrulous sculptor first outlined it to him, and frequently, as the work progressed, intimated an intention of purchasing the completed statue. His interest grew with the development of the figure, and he dropped in at the studio almost daily, idling away an hour or two with Mèndez, who declared he always worked better under the stimulus of sympathetic companionship.

Every now and then came brief intervals of rest for artist and subject, when the goddess, drawing her flowing robe about her, descended from her pedestal to a commonplace but more comfortable arm-chair, where

she fell into attitudes of languid ease which the sculptor longed to immortalize, and all three talked together, sipping their tea or wine, or the men smoking, in the friendly equality of Bohemia.

So the days passed; the artist, encouraged by the presence of so appreciative a patron as he believed Brock to be, working with increasing enthusiasm, quite blind to what was going on under his very eyes, until one morning neither the model nor the Englishman appeared at the studio.

Mèndez, honest fellow, was at a loss to understand this double absence, except on the supposition that Andrea, who seemed the picture of blooming health, was indisposed, and that Brock was off on one of the flying trips which he was accustomed to make during the annual southern sojourn which his physicians prescribed for him.

The sculptor, turning reluctantly to other and less important work to occupy the day, was thus explaining the situation to his own satisfaction, when he received a note which at once cleared away the mystery and crumbled, with one blow, the pedestal upon which his illusions had rested:

"*Amigo mio:*

"You need not finish the statue for me, as I have found it convenient to secure the original.

"Yours cordially,

"BROCK."

The Englishman's particular passion was for horses,—an enthusiasm which Andrea shared with him,—and he squandered large sums on magnificent blooded stock, and risked well nigh the balance of his fortune in backing his favorites at the races. His luck seemed almost incredible, and instead of the heavy losses which might have been expected, his winnings amounted to sums that made him the wonder and admiration of the regular betters who frequented the race-courses where his colors were well known.

The money so easily acquired was lavishly spent, in the easy-going, transient society of a metropolis where

no one has time or inclination to investigate too closely his neighbor's affairs.

Andrea's beauty gratified at once Brock's vanity and his æsthetic taste, while the *naïveté* of her enthusiastic temperament rendered her unfailingly interesting to a man of the world, no longer young. She was only twenty, and quite alone in the world, when Brock found her, except for a crabbed old uncle, who lived in what his class considered luxurious idleness on the proceeds of her hours of posing. Small wonder that Andrea's pleasure-loving disposition was captivated by her elderly lover's offers of luxury and ease,—above all, freedom from the hated pedestal whereon she posed divinely, with the easy adaptability of her race. In the surroundings of her new life, her beauty flowered into even greater brilliancy, and wherever they appeared in public, the Englishman and his companion were always the observed of all observers.

At sundown every day they were accustomed to ride, each finely mounted, Andrea usually upon Lebrel, the favorite horse of both. All the fashionable world promenades, rides or drives at this hour, and Andrea, sitting her horse with a pose at once graceful and dignified, her close-fitting habit outlining the flexible curves of waist and shoulders, was a radiant vision of loveliness and health.

The setting sun flooded trees and shrubbery with its dying rays, sparkling through a mist of gold dust; the air was moist and sweet with the perfume of many flowers, while above, the clear, southern sky crowned the whole with azure. The spirit of *dolce far niente* was over all. People sauntered up and down the *plaza*, or rested on rustic benches, almost within reach of the cooling spray of the fountains. Equestrians drew bridle here and there to greet acquaintances, while carriages rolled up and down, and beautiful women, the key-note of this concert of harmony, leaned against the soft cushions, their jewels sparkling, their plumes and ribbons stirred by the light breeze. In a picturesque pavilion an orchestra was playing. In the intervals of the music a vague,

incessant murmur of conversation filled the air, and grew more pronounced wherever Andrea passed, apparently giving all her attention to her escort and Lebrel, but secretly stabbed by certain comments which she knew their appearance evoked, for Andrea was proud,—after her fashion. She had been used to admiration all her life —but the atmosphere of the world into which she half ignorantly found herself transported—that was another thing. At such times Andrea's thoughts were wont to dwell much on the years of her orphaned youth. She remembered, with a shudder, the poor studio of the sculptor, the scant draperies of the often hungry model, and the platform on which she had passed so many hours of weary posing. Then suddenly, stung by these recollections, she would put the spurs of her little riding-boots to Lebrel, and canter down the equestrian path, drowning memory in the luxurious surroundings of her present life, with easy Southern facility.

. . . . . .

Very reluctantly did Mèndez realize that Brock's frequent visits to the studio had been prompted by an entirely different motive from his interest in abstract Art, and the sculptor's work in particular.

Full of irritation over his disillusionment, the artist was, for a time, on the point of hammering his work to pieces, but after calmer reflection over what had occurred, he compromised his disgust by a change of purpose, and transformed the Justice, by the alteration of symbols, into a still more majestic Liberty, with the idea of entering the lists of competitors invited by the government to submit designs for a statue, to be erected in one of the city's *plazas*, which should symbolize the political victories of the century.

Most of the artists presented only descriptions and sketches. Mèndez was able to exhibit a completed figure, noble and beautiful.

. . . . . .

In the great *salon* where the public daily passed judgment in this tournament of Art, Mèndez's Liberty occupied the most conspicuous position, and the space before

it was always filled with an admiring throng. Among the visitors one day were Andrea and the Englishman. Passing slowly down the long room,—she demurely unconscious of the flattering comments which Castilian etiquette permits as a public tribute to Beauty, and listening attentively to Brock, as he commented on the work of different artists whom he knew,—they reached Mèndez's statue and paused abruptly before it, with an exchange of significant glances.

For some moments they seemed quite oblivious of their surroundings, viewing the Liberty from different points of vantage.

To a few among the other spectators, perhaps, their story was known. A vague murmur of astonishment, of question and answer, arose and grew as the living, breathing model, instinct with life and color, graceful in every motion, stood face to face with the marble copy, as though competing for the people's verdict.

In that moment the triumph was Andrea's, and, giving a long, inscrutable look at the mute, cold figure, she smiled scornfully as they turned away, while Brock, looking from the one to the other murmured: "I have gained in the exchange!"

They passed on, followed by the glances of all eyes, for the people had forgotten the statue, which a few moments before had held them captive; but the Liberty, imperious and cold, erect on her marble pedestal, gazed far into space with majestic repose.

. . . . . .

It was Andrea's caprice, one morning, to test Lebrel's speed, and, mounted on the spirited animal, she left the house alone, without divulging her intention to Brock, who was engaged in business matters and could not accompany her. She had never ridden Lebrel before without Brock or a groom in attendance, and now, when once they reached the outskirts of the city at a lively canter, she put her spurs to the animal without mercy. Though a spirited horse, Lebrel had always obeyed the slightest wish of his mistress, but this was a new experience to him. Faster and faster they flew,

Andrea urging him on by word and gesture, over a smooth stretch of country road, until, horse and rider panting and dusty, she attempted to slacken their speed at the top of a low hill; but Lebrel, now thoroughly roused, was not so easily checked, and just as his mistress, giddy and fainting, in despair of stopping him as they neared a deep ditch, urged him with the spur to leap it, he fell, breaking his leg and throwing Andrea, headlong, upon a pile of pebbles and rocks.

. . . . . .

At last the physician permitted Andrea's nurse to remove the bandages in which her head had been swathed for so many weeks. She had been too proud to inquire about her wounds of her attendant, but for long days and nights she had dreaded, yet feverishly wished for, the moment when she could know for herself the results of her fall. At last that time had come, and she improved the first moment of solitude to creep to the cheval glass which had so often reflected her charms to their smiling original.

Moments passed unnoticed as she realized the shocking truth; moments in which Andrea stood dumb, crushed by unavailing, anguished regret, horror and rage. Her brow was furrowed with scars; her nose, swollen and bruised, bore no trace of its former classic straightness. There was an ugly gash, not yet healed, across one cheek, and all the lovely curves of her lips had vanished with the loss of several teeth and the furrows made by the cruel stones on which she was thrown.

With a moan of agony she staggered back, at last, to her couch, where she lay, pallid and convulsed, until the first anguish of the sight had worn away; then, in a passion of rage such as only undisciplined natures like hers know, she snatched up a curious Turkish knife, with a long, ugly blade,—a curio which she had once coaxed from Brock,—and tottered, with the uncertain steps of an invalid, to the stall which Lebrel occupied.

Yes, there he stood, a perfect piece of horse-flesh, recovered from his wounds, well and handsome. And

she! With a cry of rage she plunged the knife into the animal's side, and, almost blind with fury, drove it on its deadly mission up to the hilt.

Lebrel, trembling, and with a shrill cry of agony, sank to the floor as the blood poured from the wound, and turned his dying eyes pitifully upon his mistress, who stood over him with an inhuman, frenzied expression of triumph.

A dying animal; a woman with a scar-covered face and distorted features, almost crazy with mingled rage and horror. This was the spectacle which presented itself to Brock, returning from a stroll through the *plaza* at the hour when, so often, he and Andrea had cantered gaily into the courtyard, she flushed with her triumphs and he complacent over them.

Whatever the Englishman's feelings may have been, he viewed the scene with insular calmness.

"You have ruined yourself, Andrea," he said coldly, as she, too agitated to speak, stood trembling before him. "Only this morning I sold Lebrel for a sum which I intended to settle upon you. As you consider him the cause of your misfortune, I meant to make him the means of your future welfare. Things have gone against me during your illness; I did not tell you, because I did not wish to add anything to your troubles. I shall be obliged to leave here this week. I will send your nurse to you."

He turned from her and entered the house, as Andrea, with a cry of despair, fell fainting across the body of Lebrel, burying her disfigured face in his mane.

Five years later, a poor beggar, ugly, scarred and repulsive—a vagabond in the city's streets, crawled one winter's afternoon to the steps of the semicircular court wherein stood a monument, erected in a popular *plaza*. It was the Liberty of Mèndez.

Some mischievous boys, loitering about, began jeering at the poor creature, and followed that up by throwing pebbles and bits of earth at her, until, irritated beyond endurance, she rose to her feet, and, after a defiant glance at her persecutors from her bleared eyes,

wearily climbed the steps of the approach to the pedestal. There, raising aloft one emaciated arm, she stood, quite erect, in the very pose of the statue.

"*La bruja!*" "The witch! The old hag!" screamed the boys, and gradually a crowd gathered, as passers-by observed the strange scene.

Something of the dignity and repose of the marble figure seemed to pass to the poor outcast, as she continued to stand, motionless, the wind blowing her thin locks in fantastic tangles about her disfigured face.

At last she raised her head and looked long at the majestic figure above her:

"*Imbéciles!* I am she," she cried in a harsh voice to her tormentors below.

"What does she say?" "She is drunk," "She is crazy," commented the observers, some compassionately, some with jeers, according to their humors.

"Those arms are mine. Those are my feet," cried the poor creature, shoving back her ragged sleeve and pushing forward a foot scarcely covered with a tattered shoe.

"It is a case for the police," said the more thoughtful people, beseeching the boys to desist, as they moved on; but the *muchachos* continued to tease and taunt the mendicant until, exhausted with sallies at them from the foot of the monument, to which she had descended, she fell upon the steps, burying her head with its writhing locks, like those of a Medusa, in her ragged shawl, and the boys ran away, in the gathering darkness, fearing the police.

But no one came, and all night she lay there, as motionless as the marble keeping guard above her.

They found her so in the morning. It had been unusually cold, and her thin shawl was drawn close about her. Under her half-closed eyelids the tears were congealed, but her face was turned upward, toward the majestic type of womanhood at whose feet she lay, while the statue, calm, reposeful, victorious, with one hand pointing heavenward, gazed steadfastly into eternity.

In this amusing little— shall it be called a satire? —upon our excellent philanthropists, Clyde Fitch, the clever author of "Beau Brummel" and other successful, high-class plays, reveals the dramatic touch which gives form and reality to the creations of the mind.

MISS CARMEN'S LAST CHARITY.

Miss Carmen's pet charity was the fund for Mexican Indians, in which she had been interested three years before by a handsome, enthusiastic young curate, who was staying in the same summer boarding-house as herself. He had been on a ranch in Northern Mexico the year after he graduated from college, and before he had decided to go into the ministry. Miss Carmen, who had a very vague idea of what a ranch was, confusing it in her mind with cowboys, plundered coaches, and rescued maidens, considered Mr. Howard one of those reclaimed victims of a life of dissipation (he was, by the way, when she met him, just twenty-three years old!), though he had in reality never done anything particularly wrong in his life. Miss Carmen belonged to that class of women one never knows how to speak of, whether as a "lady" or "young lady," unless one is addressing the person herself, when one is apt to venture on the latter term. And it must also be acknowledged she could not resist the attraction of a man who was "turning over a new leaf." This species sometimes even took precedence of her charity in her favor; and that is saying a good deal, for her charity, whatever it happened at the time to be, was so dear to her heart, it made her almost a dread to her friends. Perhaps you met her in a store; before you could hurry by with a "Good morning, Miss Carmen," she would stop you: "O! Laura Lafarge, you're the very girl I want to see. I want you to take a booth at the fair next week for the —— —— charity. You can have any booth you wish, but won't you be in the

Mikado? I want girls who will get up handsome costumes, and you know, with your taste—" etc. Or, "Margaret Wyndoff, I'm so glad I've met you, just step aside here a moment, will you; I'm going to ask you to help me in a little international tea I'm getting up for those poor—such poverty, such distress, I can't tell you how they appeal to me. Now do promise to furnish flowers, and appear in the Greek group—the costume will be very simple, and I've asked for veil," etc. Or on the street, "Good morning, Mr. Garey, won't you turn around and walk with me a few moments? I'm going to ask a favor of you, which I want you to promise to grant me. It's really nothing at all for you to do, and it is for a very worthy charity; young Mrs. Carley has said she will be Lady Washington, and I want you to be George in an old-time tea-party." And often before you can refuse she is gone with, "Good-bye, I knew you would; so kind of you; good-bye."

Now it was theatricals, and for the Mexican Indians again. Her friends, to tell the truth, were getting a little tired of doing for these creatures. They had been to teas for them, to a kirmess for them, to tableaux, to lectures for them; enough of things to have educated whole tribes of them, Mrs. Ned Brown said, if they had only been there themselves. And she added she really didn't see why they should be made to suffer and pay both; if they must give these things, give them, but make the Indians go themselves. However, Mrs. Brown was a flighty little woman, whom every one laughed at in his sleeve, while people all did admire Miss Carmen, though they were getting a little tired of her charities.

All these things Miss Carmen felt in an indefinite sort of way as she came home from the mission school one afternoon. It was Mr. Howard's mission, and he had spoken so beautifully to the poor children that day. But then he always did. He had spoken so kindly to her too; somehow or other, some people seemed to take it for granted that she could go out in any kind of weather, with no matter how bad a cold, without any

danger. And to-day had been her birthday; she did not think what birthday; the fact itself was bad enough without being numbered. She was getting old, she thought with a sigh—dear me!—much too old to be thinking so much of this handsome young minister, and much too old to have that drop on her cheek; she must walk faster and think of something else, and yes, she would ask her sister to take her mission class, at least for a while. She passed a wretched beggar sitting on the curb grinding a small organette that had stops nearly a minute long between each note. Miss Carmen looked quickly around and then furtively dropped a quarter into the tin cup and passed on. She had been told such charity was misapplied, but then she had felt just like it and was willing to run the risk. So Mr. Howard was really going back to Mexico, not as a ranchman this time, but as a missionary. What should she do when he was gone—what, had it come to this! She must think of something else, and she hurried on, without noticing two young girls who passed her quickly. "I was so afraid she would see us," one of them said. "I know she'd ask me to be in a booth, or take part in those theatricals." Girls who never did any good in the world, and probably never would, who could not even appreciate the self-sacrificing labor of Miss Carmen. Undoubtedly the latter did lack judgment, or let us say moderation, but in her proper sphere, or under able guidance, what might she not accomplish?

She found a note at home for her from Uliss Tower, saying she was sorry, but her health was so wretched this winter her physician had tabooed theatricals. She also found Mr. Garey's card, with a hasty note on the back, which said how much he regretted he would not be able to take the part Miss Carmen had so kindly assigned to him.

Miss Carmen sat down and cried. She knew it was silly, but she didn't care. She was tired out and overworried, and she threw herself down on her couch and had a "good cry." She was bathing her eyes and smoothing her hair when the maid brought her Mr.

Howard's card. She put in another hairpin and then went right down.

"Oh," she said, without even greeting him, "I'm perfectly wretched! Two of my people have backed out. I did think when I had only three in the play, I should have no trouble, but the only two who can act won't act. What shall I do?"

And she laughed nervously, feeling dangerously near her mood upstairs. Howard felt very sorry for her, so sorry he did not know what to say. Finally he murmured, "I wish I could help you; of course I couldn't act,—but can't you," he added quickly as the thought came to him. "Why don't you take Miss Tower's part?" Miss Carmen blushed and laughed. "Oh, no! I am too old; I couldn't." And Howard answered, "How absurd, Miss Carmen; you know you——" And then stopped embarrassed. He knew she was older than he, he had deplored that often, especially of late. He was afraid perhaps she looked down on him. He did not care about age. "I am getting so discouraged," she went on. "I am always trying to help, or do good in some way, but I don't seem to succeed. My way is not the right one; I've overdone it; people are getting tired of my subscription lists; if I could only do some honest work myself." An idea was forming in Howard's mind, one full of hope. He could give her the opportunity she wished for. His age ought not to be a stumbling-block, he was sure he could not love her more dearly were he twenty or thirty years older than he was—and just then a young lady was announced.

"O, Annie!" exclaimed Miss Carmen. "I'm so glad you've come, I am in the greatest trouble, will you help me?" "Of course I will if I can, but you must tell what it is before I promise, and I warn you beforehand, I refuse to be a Rebecca and sell lemonade, and on no account will I dress myself up for a Japanese woman. I did it once and it was too hideously unbecoming; now tell me——" "I only want you," continued Miss Carmen, "to take part in a little play to be given privately here—O, excuse me, Mr. Howard—Miss Gor-

don, my rector, Mr. Howard. I am so upset, you know. I quite forgot myself. The play is for——"

"The Mexican Indians," Miss Gordon interrupted, "I knew it; well, why don't you ask Grace Henley?"

"I did, and she refused."

"Bell Mathews then, she acts."

"Her mother won't let her."

"Why not Mrs. Porter?"

"Her husband doesn't approve."

"How absurd! What's the matter with Sue Tower?"

"O, her physician has forbidden her acting, and you're the only one left; I wouldn't ask you for I know you are very busy, but I am getting desperate."

Miss Gordon said she would do what she could, and took the play-book home with her, though she told Miss Carmen she couldn't promise to be a credit to her. She agreed to find a man for her vis-à-vis, and left her friend radiant once more. "You don't know what a load you've taken off my mind," the latter said to Annie, as she went away with Mr. Howard, forgetting how long he was holding her hand until Annie coughed. Miss Gordon told her mother that night that, if there was not so great a difference in their ages, she would think there was something between them.

But the next day—well, Miss Carmen said she would have to laugh, if she did not she would cry again, it was so crushing. It reminded her of the time she had a beautiful portière embroidered, to raffle for the benefit of some poor mission, and the minister, who was opposed to raffles, persuaded her they were wrong. No one was willing to pay what the portière was worth, so it ended in her buying it herself, and giving up her Washington trip that winter. Now to-day the noon mail brought a letter from Annie Gordon, who wrote to know why in the world she didn't tell her there was singing in the part, and asking her if she did not know that she, Annie, could not sing a note! And in the same mail came a letter from the brother of Mr. White, who had been her stand-by all through, saying his brother had the measles, and so of course would not be

able, etc. The theatricals looked dubious. In the midst of her consternation Mr. Howard arrived on the scene. She gave him a trembling hand, and was as frightened as could be lest she should cry. He told her almost immediately what he had come to ask. "I know I'm young," he stammered.

"O, no!" she interrupted, "I am old." But what followed is their business, not ours, nor Mrs. Brown's, who said afterward, "What is the man thinking of? She's old enough to be his mother!" She was not really, though what if she were, if they loved each other?

As Howard started to leave at dusk, after he and Miss Carmen had fully discussed the advantages of Mexico for a honeymoon, and for work, she said to him: "It will be a wedding, instead of theatricals."

"Yes, and you will play the heroine after all," he answered.

"If you'd like to have me ask Miss Gordon——" But she never finished that speech.

ROMANCE.

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ON SALE IN BOSTON AT THE STORES OF

W. Bixby & Co. S. Q. Cochran & Co. John Gilbert, Jr., & Co.
John Lyons. M. Doherty & Co. S. S. Pierce & Co.
Reuben Ring & Co. and others.

Married people are strangely delinquent in refuting the accusations brought against them as a class by such shrewd observers as "Contessa Lara," the witty author of this story, which has been made into English from the Italian by Brenton Ayrault for ROMANCE. Possibly it is because such amusing irony is too palpably founded on envy; or because the bread-and-butter flavor of domestic felicity is too apt to fall flat when introduced into literature. There is, however, but one opinion on the subject of the spoiled child, whom "Contessa Lara" introduces so effectively.

AN INHERITANCE.

I.

AMONG the amusing stories told me by my grandmother, who, in her youth, was much at court, is the following, which I give, as nearly as I recall it, in her language:

Donna Lodovica Salviati was left a widow very young. Don Lorenzo Salviati, Marquis di Cajano, was both old and rich, when he asked her to become his wife. She had thrown herself, weeping, into the arms of her father, who only laughed at her tears as he counted off on his fingers, by way of consolation, the numerous estates of her aged suitor, while she, meantime, poor girl, simply reckoned up his years. Of course, there was the usual school-girl romance to be taken into consideration here, and the charming friend whom she had loved from her childhood! This same charming friend, though he talked and danced with equal grace, and though he was so many years younger than his rival, was also possessed of much less property. So, burying in the deep recesses of her heart her tender affection for Don Gastone, Count di San Giorgio, Donna Lodovica gave her hand to the old marquis.

No children were born of this union. Gout and a cough soon reduced the tiresome old husband to an invalid, at the same time keeping the young wife shut away in the country with him. Thus eighteen

months passed, and then the old man left this world for a better one. The lovely young marchioness was obliged for a time to lay aside her white gowns, and don the insignia of woe; however, the black seemed rather to emphasize her blonde beauty.

The "late lamented" left her everything; but—alas, that there should be a but (the condition, however, is not unnatural)—with the condition that she should not marry again: in the event of her doing so, the greater part of the patrimony was to pass into the hands of his cousin, chamberlain to the reigning duke.

Don Gastone di San Giorgio lost no time in going to the widow to offer his condolence. To him she seemed more beautiful than ever; while he, in turn, seemed more charming even than in days of yore. He talked all day without coughing; she listened all day without yawning. His eyes expressed only deepest love, while her sweet smile grew almost beatified. But, as Don Gastone went on to tell her of his fond passion, and of all that he had suffered, Donna Lodovica's thoughts reverted, with growing intensity, to that inexorable clause in the will. What was to be done?

"Dearest, you torment yourself uselessly," whispered this ardent lover, as he knelt one day at the beloved one's feet. "Among other misfortunes, you are jealous. The idea springs into your mind that a period might come when I should love you less. Why do we not put an end to these melancholy thoughts?"

"And how, pray?" asked the marchioness, drying her eyes and trying to smile.

"The way is simple enough. Let's be married."

"And the will? You seem always to forget that horrible will!"

She threw herself back in the arm-chair, and, burying her face in her hands, sobbed aloud.

"We will be married secretly," he continued calmly. "You, I, the priest, and Love; no one else need know about it."

"Exactly; but don't you see, there's got to be a priest!" she interrupted in an agitated manner.

"Oh, I'll attend to that," he pursued quietly. "Here in the neighborhood, there's an old priest, very poor, and nearly eighty years of age. I will give him a sum of money which will enable him to pass his few remaining days in comfort, and he will take our secret to the grave with him. Leave it to me, little one!"

The marchioness, her heart overflowing with happiness, threw herself into the arms of Don Gastone; who, in turn, delighted to have found a solution to the problem, proceeded to carry out his plan. It was not difficult to ease the conscience of the old priest by a goodly sum, and the young widow became his wife in the eyes of heaven.

II.

A year passed. The visits of Don Gastone were more frequent and of longer duration; thus, to an outsider, it might seem that he was wooing more ardently than formerly, even. When he left, after one of these visits, however, it could be noted that Donna Lodovica did not stand at the window to watch him mount his horse at the foot of the great stairs, and again, when he was returning, his eyes were not fixed on the long veranda of the villa, as if looking there for the beloved figure of its owner. She (it really seems impossible) actually yawned over some of his stories; while he (you'll scarcely believe it) would fall asleep during her execution of a brilliant gavotte, or the singing of a lovely melody. Still, their lives flowed on.

The servants noted now and then some familiarity in their manner toward each other, not common to ordinary friendship, and yet their affection for one another did not seem ardent enough to warrant suspicion of a closer relationship.

The past year had made them so absolutely sure of each other that they no longer took the trouble not to betray by word or act their secret, and thus people began to conjecture, then to suspect, and finally felt so sure of the case that idle and indiscreet gossip put the enemy's camp in possession of the rumors.

Count Merli-Robecchi, the court chamberlain, and the heir to Don Lorenzo Salviati's property, if the latter's will was not scrupulously carried out, was just now out of favor with the duke, owing to the fact that he had got heavily in debt; and therefore he had retired temporarily to his villa, accompanied, of course, by his better half, Donna Maria.

Both husband and wife were in very ill humor: the chamberlain, because in his private and public entertainments he had squandered a great deal of money and broken down his health; his wife—formerly maid of honor and lady in waiting and really a great beauty herself—because she had had to leave the place where she had been surrounded by admirers and soothed with the incense of flattery, to retire into the obscurity and solitude of country life. Their property joined that on which Donna Lodovica lived by preference.

Scarcely had the chamberlain heard the stories which were being noised about the neighborhood, and for which it did not really seem that there could be ground, than he hastened to make a visit to the adjoining estate, ostensibly to pay his respects to his kinswoman, but in reality to ascertain for himself just how much truth there was in the public rumor.

The little widow, however, was expecting his visit. Don Gaston, who was present, was cunning enough to display the most tender and eager interest in the lady, from whose face he seemed scarcely able to move his eyes, while she, on her part, was sweet and a bit coquettish; so misleading, in fact, was their conduct toward each other that the poor chamberlain returned home defeated and much confused.

"My dear Maria," said he to his countess, "the world is made up of fools! Why, you've only to see those two for a moment to convince yourself that all the gossip about them is absolutely groundless. During the two hours that I was there, San Giorgio never left her side for an instant. How he looked at her!—They're not married! Believe me, they are not husband and wife!"

The countess shook her head thoughtfully; being a

woman, of course, she did not consider herself worsted in the argument; on the contrary, she intended to pursue it.

"Every one may say that it's all a mistake, no truth in the rumor and all that; but that won't convince me! Tell me, did you notice nothing? The merest trifle will betray people, you know. Now think."

"Nothing! You may rest assured that I was on the alert all the time. My dear, it is not my fault that the property of Lorenzo is still in the hands of his widow."

"Sometimes," persisted Donna Maria, "a little act of indifference, laziness even, will suffice to reveal the true situation. Reflect well, now. For instance: Did she drop her handkerchief during the interview?"

"Her handkerchief?" the count began to turn over every detail in his memory. "Her handkerchief? No, I think not,—but her fan did fall from her lap."

"And did she pick it up herself?" asked Donna Maria.

"Yes, herself," looking at his wife in surprise.

"Don Gastone did not rush forward?"

The count shook his head in the negative. Then his wife, regaining her wonted serenity, tapped him on the shoulder.

"You delightfully stupid creature! Don't you see that the so-called idle gossip is simply a confirmation of the truth? Believe me, they are husband and wife."

"Wait, now I think of it," added the chamberlain, "there was something else. The marchioness had on an exquisite gown, and I complimented her on it."

"And San Giorgio?" asked Donna Maria.

"Oh, he delivered quite an essay on woman's taste; the history of dress, in fact, from the period of Eve and the fig-leaf up to the latest court robe of her serene highness, the duchess. He's quite daft on the subject of Greek costumes."

"Oh, Donna Lodovica had on an Athenian tunic?" murmured Donna Maria, with a touch of malice.

"Not at all! It was covered with lace, and came last week from Paris. She told me that herself."

"That settles it," exclaimed the countess, clapping

her hands gleefully. "There is no longer any doubt, in *my* mind; they are husband and wife."

The count still hesitated.

"But their glances, their ardent looks!" he began again.

Donna Maria really grew quite furious at her husband's incredulity.

"Good heavens! But what further proofs do you want? Listen: a lover would have thrown himself on his knees, even as the fan fell to the floor; the husband, on the contrary, stood perfectly quiet, and let her have the trouble of picking it up herself. A lover would have no other desire than to listen, look, and admire; the husband, instead, finds time and inclination for a long discourse, in which to air his opinions on any subject at hand. To a lover only the dress worn by his sweetheart would seem beautiful; whereas the husband announces himself as an advocate of Greek costumes! You, poor soul, cannot understand this?"

The chamberlain, somewhat impressed, laughed.

"Well, we shall see," he said. "To-morrow we are all invited to a fête champêtre at Villa Romagnoli, and the marchioness and Don Gastone will be there, too. Among a crowd of people, when they think themselves least observed, they will surely betray themselves. We will study them carefully. Perhaps, after all, you are right; and again, it may be that I am. When I remember those enamored glances—but, enough; to-morrow we shall see who is right."

III.

On the following day, an aristocratic company had gathered at the Romagnoli villa, where only Donna Lodovica and San Giorgio were lacking to make its enjoyment complete.

They, young, beautiful, and clever, were naturally regarded as indispensable to the entertainment. But people were about giving up all hope of seeing them, when a cloud of dust on the highway indicated that a carriage was coming along at great speed.

The lovely Marchioness Salviati looked out of one window to bow to her friends, while her companion gazed abstractedly from the other. The wife of the chamberlain nudged her husband's arm pleasantly, and smiled. The carriage stopped; and, while San Giorgio jumped lightly to the ground, and proceeded to shake the dust from his clothes, a servant assisted the marchioness to alight.

"Husband and wife, I'll take my oath on that," whispered Donna Maria to her spouse.

And he, in return: "May be; certainly there are things now that begin to make me think so."

Donna Lodovica came forward with charming grace, making apologies for the late arrival; while Don Gastone bit his lips, frowned, and looked irritated; then he said that women in general had a perfect mania for keeping people waiting; they liked to play with their friends as a dancer did with her public, on a first night.

The chamberlain and his wife exchanged glances.

When the dinner was announced, the host gave his arm to Donna Maria; the chamberlain, his to Signora Romagnoli; and the other guests, in turn, formed in couples according to official rank or private choice, as etiquette or desire prompted. Count San Giorgio took out a fair stranger to whom he had been presented a few moments before, and left his lovely marchioness to a young man, whom she scarcely knew. Donna Maria noted the lack of gallantry on the part of Don Gastone, and turned to look at the chamberlain again, with whom she exchanged a knowing smile.

The repast was good, and merriment abounded. San Giorgio, quite carried away by the charms of the fair stranger, displayed a wit and repartee worthy of a true Spanish Don Juan; the marchioness, vivacious and agreeable to all those around her, seemed to have completely forgotten the presence of her adoring suitor.

After dinner, Signora Romagnoli proposed a turn in the park; and thus the jolly party, amid a perfect shower of brilliant witticisms, turned their steps toward a foaming cascade, just at the head of a lovely little

lake, which seemed really like a poetic mirror surrounding the garden. To reach this spot, however, one had to pass over a rustic bridge, without railings; and there was quite a rivalry among the men, who helped the fair ones across, as like frightened birds they paused, then gave little screams before venturing further out on this airy structure. Don Gastone, light of foot and bolder than the other men, assisted nearly all the ladies, taking them, in turn, by the hand, or by putting his arm lightly about the waist, as he passed them across the chasm.

"You have saved my life!" more than one of the lovely creatures would exclaim, as she sprang lightly to the ground on the other side of the lake.

He helped the marchioness across last.

The countess approached the chamberlain: "Well, you see now that they are husband and wife?"

"I do."

When they returned home that evening, the worthy pair were still discussing the happenings of the day, going over scene by scene of the interesting story.

"But you really are a very clever woman!" said the husband, quite lost in admiration. "'Pon my word now, I might have been near them ten years without seeing anything of this."

"And now, my dear," she replied, insinuatingly, "we must obtain the proofs, eh?"

"Oh, I'll attend to that. I heard San Giorgio say this evening, that day after to-morrow he was going into town for the day; so, of course, he'll not be calling on the marchioness at that time; thus the field is left to me. Between now and then, I will consult my lawyer, and see just what I can do."

To say was to do. The lawyer was closeted several hours with the chamberlain, and the following day the latter went to see the marchioness.

"Alone?" he exclaimed, with well-assumed surprise, as he entered the drawing-room of the widow, adding meaningly, and with a friendly smile, "You know, we always expect to see the moth hovering about the candle. Where is San Giorgio?"

"Count San Giorgio won't call to-day," replied the marchioness quietly, "for he had to go to town. He will be sorry not to have met you here."

The chamberlain seated himself; then looked round the room, admiring the taste with which it was furnished, and especially noting some antique paintings.

"My poor husband was a rare connoisseur," remarked Donna Lodovica. "This collection shows what a lover and what a judge he was of fine arts."

"And this fine taste of his procured him something more precious than pictures," observed the chamberlain, as, taking the pretty little white hand of the marchioness, which rested on the sofa, he raised it to his lips with gallantry. "But what an odd fellow he was. His eccentricities never left him, even at the last. The will shows that."

Donna Lodovica looked at him in some surprise. He, without appearing to notice this, continued:

"To expect you, young as you are, to remain a widow just because this old egotist decreed to torment you even after his death! Ah, my cousin forgot that at your age the heart is made for love."

The marchioness blushed, and dropped her eyes.

"Don Gastone is an old friend of yours, is he not?" continued the visitor.

"We have known each other since we were children."

"Don Gastone, my dear marchioness, I consider one of the most sympathetic young men I know. Really, without exaggeration, he was the greatest favorite, the most attractive, of all the men in our set. Too bad that it is a year now since he deserted society altogether. But he has not wasted his time, as we all know. Still, according to my lights, he has one fault. How is it possible that, with a passion for a woman like yourself, he has not had the courage to overcome the obstacles placed in the way by a jealous old man?"

The marchioness was visibly embarrassed.

The chamberlain grew more smiling and friendly.

"Come, Donna Lodovica, why won't you be frank with me? Every one knows the secret of you two now,

I can assure you of that, and yet you strive to conceal it from me, showing thus a lack of confidence in me."

The marchioness started, and rose to her feet.

"But how is it possible?" she exclaimed in a hoarse, almost sobbing voice. "Did the old priest tell? Oh, count, speak, for pity's sake! Tell me,—what do you know? What do other people know?"

"Calm yourself, calm yourself, my dear marchioness! Perhaps you think I wish to serve my own interests by ruining yours? There you are very much mistaken. As far as I am concerned, I shall act as if I had neither heard nor seen anything. You are welcome to enjoy this happiness, which has come to you after such long waiting, after two years of such sacrifice; but I will allow myself to suggest an amendment. I have children, who might rise up one of these days to condemn my excessive generosity to you, as a gross injustice to themselves. Therefore, I must do something for them. Another man in my place would ask for a great deal, bringing forth proofs in justification of his conduct; I, instead, respect your secret, and spare your heart from further suffering. The friend keeps silent; but the father speaks."

"Good heavens!" cried the marchioness, in tears. "What do you want me to do?"

Count Merli-Robecchi drew a paper from his pocket.

"You know," continued he serenely, "that my finances have suffered considerable loss. Don Lorenzo, your first husband, left to you his entire fortune, an immense one. I repeat to you, I will do nothing for myself, as regards the will; but this injury to my property ought not to descend to my children. Therefore, my dear friend, will you just sign this little document, in which it is agreed that you pay a portion of my debts?"

As he finished, he rose to get a pen. Meantime, Donna Lodovica had recovered her presence of mind.

"First of all," she remarked, more quietly, "you will allow me to say that I want the proofs on which your suspicions are founded."

"To what end?" replied the count, smiling in a

marked manner. "Why, one of these days the courts will communicate them to you."

"The courts?"

"Oh, yes. The law will take its course, naturally; you will be cited to appear and take your oath, denying these rumors. It's only a formality, of course; but not always to one's taste."

"Oh, dear, dear!" murmured the marchioness, wringing her hands, and growing white as death.

"You swear to this," continued the chamberlain calmly, "and so remain in possession of everything."

The marchioness seized the pen.

"Your children shall lose nothing," she said quickly, and signed the paper.

Merli-Robecchi kissed again the lovely little hand which gave him back the paper, and then took his leave.

IV.

When the Count Gastone di San Giorgio returned, the fair chatelaine threw herself sobbing into his arms.

"We have been betrayed, my love!"

"Betrayed?" he asked in surprise.

"That old priest must have gossiped."

Don Gastone shrugged his shoulders.

"Rather difficult, I should say," he remarked, "for he died ten months ago."

At this news the marchioness was startled, grew frightened, then almost delirious, as she related in great excitement the visit of the chamberlain, from beginning to end, finishing with an account of the signing of the legal paper.

"Oh, but this is a downright fraud!" cried San Giorgio. "See, he took advantage of your good faith and your innocence. By heaven, though, I swear he shan't enjoy his triumph for long!"

Enraged, he rushed from the room, ordered his horse, and galloped off in the direction of the chamberlain's villa. The latter came forward eagerly to meet him. "Count, I have two words to say to you; but I would like to see you alone."

"Certainly, certainly, my dear fellow; but since you have done us the honor to arrive just at the dinner-hour, you must take pot-luck with us." Saying which, the host led Don Gastone with great affability toward the dining-room, where the family was already assembled.

"Count," repeated Don Gastone, "I must have two words with you. Yesterday you saw the marchioness, and talked to her of a suspicion which concerns me, as well as herself."

"All right," replied the chamberlain. "The story is being talked of by every one, and I simply applied to the marchioness for confirmation."

"Count," continued San Giorgio, "stories, in themselves, amount to nothing; one must prove them."

"We'll talk it over after dinner," responded his host amiably, now sure that he held the whip-handle. "If we delay longer, the soup will be cold."

Don Gastone had no choice but to follow, so, bowing, he accepted the invitation, and the chamberlain threw open the dining-room door, announcing the unexpected guest to his wife.

The Merli-Robecchi children, through the great affection borne them by their parents, had overcome the family rules of the ancient aristocracy, and actually dined with them. The youngest, the mother's favorite, sat next to her, and every now and then crept down from his place at the table to amuse himself by pinching his father's legs. Twice the chamberlain had drawn his legs away, annoyed, irritated, and grumbling against the troublesomeness of ill-bred children. This only delighted the spoiled child. He continued to scramble down to the floor and make his little excursions under the table near his father's legs, laughing, and knocking him, until the latter, losing all patience, gave the small rogue a kick. He fell, and screaming crept to his mother's knee.

"This child is destined for the gallows!" cried the chamberlain, rubbing the leg where the sharp nails of the little hands had left a deep impression.

The mother on her side, trembling with indignation, wiped the tears from her favorite's cheeks.

"Poor little darling! Did he hurt you?" she asked coaxingly.

"That's right! You make him worse than ever with such petting!"

"Eh! Good gracious! These poor children cannot move without bringing about a most awful scene!"

"Maria, I wish my children to be educated, and I do not intend that they shall learn the manners of peasant-folk. They are destined to pass their lives at court, not in the fields!"

"Time enough before they go to court. Meantime I want them to grow up strong, happy, and healthy. With your system they would become mummies, and not human beings!"

The chamberlain remained silent, simply raising his eyebrows. The countess grew quite moved, as she enumerated the virtues of her children, the victims of a tyrannical father. The domestic hurricane was still in the air, when they all rose from the table. Don Gastone, somewhat out of patience by this time, reminded Merli-Robecchi of his promise. The latter took him to his study, and closed the door behind them.

"My friend," he asked suddenly, "am I a married man or not?"

San Giorgio looked at him in astonishment.

"What the deuce are you driving at, count?"

"Now, San Giorgio, you were not at my wedding, you did not see me at the altar. Permit me therefore to ask how you really know that I am married?"

"This is a singular jest on your part, count. I know it,—why, because I have been told it."

"Ah, then you accept that as a proof?" the chamberlain retorted quickly.

"You—you surprise me, count. I knew of your marriage before I had the honor of meeting you; and then, why, I can see it with my own eyes."

"What have you seen?"

"Oh, really, my dear count, there are trifles which reveal a situation, you know. Between husband and wife, for instance, there is less ceremony than between other men and women; they do not choose their expressions with great care when they are talking together. Sometimes—they differ in their views regarding the bringing up their children."

"Exactly!" continued the chamberlain, smiling. "The first ardor fades away; but they go on living together. Every attention, every courtesy almost, is reserved for outsiders. Husband and wife are the last to think of each other."

"Count," interrupted Don Gastone, "you are talking delightfully, and very cleverly; but it seems to me that we are far a-field of our subject."

"On the contrary, it seems to me that we are discussing it now." Then, going to his desk, he took from it a paper. "Will you do me the favor to hand this little document to the marchioness? You can read it, my dear San Giorgio; for it is simply my renunciation of all hereditary rights to the property of my cousin, the late Marquis Salviati."

"The marchioness will be deeply touched by your generosity, count; but, if I am not mistaken, she gave you also a paper."

"True, true," assented the chamberlain, "but it will not fall into the hands of my heirs until the proper time, of course. At present, and for some time to come, let us hope, it will sleep with other papers in my desk."

"Count," exclaimed Don Gastone, in a burst of frankness and gratitude, "I thank you in the name of my wife, who, being both just and generous, will reward you through your children."

Saying which, he proceeded to take leave of his host with almost fraternal cordiality.

"You are contemplating taking quite a journey, are you not?" Merli-Robecchi asked, as he accompanied his guest toward the door.

"H'm, yes, perhaps. Donna Lodovica intends going

to Naples, and I thought that I'd join her there. We're rather bored here, just now."

"Eh! But why not begin your wedding journey from here? There's no longer any impediment to the announcement of your marriage, you know. Only, remember, the observations one makes in travelling are often very instructive. For instance, be it at Naples, Paris, or Berlin, when you see a pretty woman sitting near a man, who does not pick up her fan when she drops it; when you hear a man talking agreeably, and the woman yawning; when, in short, both seem to get easily bored in each other's society, be it in the country, at Naples, Berlin, or Paris, then you may put them down as an old married pair!"

Don Gastone sprang into his saddle.

"Ride fast," counseled his friend, laughing. "A quick gallop toward the villa will confuse the neighbors a bit; for when men are returning home to their wives, they let the horse go at a snail's pace."

San Giorgio laughed merrily, too, as he drove the spurs into his steed, and disappeared in the twinkling of an eye.

It is to be hoped that the persevering and attractive manner in which the heroes in stories appear at the right juncture, and prove themselves equal to every emergency, will have a salutary effect upon the average young man of the period. Most people of experience have found that he is likely to be absent when especially wanted, and when he is present, he becomes as scared and unreasonable as any of the rest. The hero of this very interesting anonymous Australian story, from *London Society*, sets the needed example, and "arrives," to use the elegant French expression, in a singularly neat and felicitous style.

BONES,

THE APRIL FOOL OF HARVEY'S SLUICE.

I.

Abe Durton's cabin was not beautiful. People have been heard to assert that it was ugly, and even, after the fashion of Harvey's Sluice, have gone the length of prefixing their adjective with a forcible expletive which emphasized their criticism. Abe, however, was a stolid and easy-going man, on whose mind the remarks of an unappreciative public made but little impression. He had built the house himself, and it suited both himself and his partner, and what more did they want?

There was only one man inside the hut, and that was the proprietor, Abe Durton himself, or "Bones," as he had been christened with the rude heraldry of the camp. He was sitting in front of the great wood fire, gazing moodily into its glowing depths, and occasionally giving a fagot a kick of remonstrance when it showed any indication of dying into a smoulder. His fair Saxon face, with its bold, honest eyes and crisp yellow beard, stood out sharp and clear against the darkness as the flickering light played over it. It was a manly, resolute countenance, and yet the physiognomist might have detected something in the lines of the mouth which showed a weakness somewhere, an

indecision which contrasted strangely with his Herculean shoulders and massive limbs.

"The Boss is late to-night," he muttered, as he rose from his chair and stretched himself in a colossal yawn. "My stars, how it does rain and blow! Don't it, Blinky?" Blinky was a demure and meditative owl, whose comfort and welfare were a chronic subject of solicitude to its master, and who at present contemplated him gravely from one of the rafters.

Abe was still talking when the rough door was flung open, and a blinding cloud of sleet and rain came driving into the cabin, almost obscuring for the moment a young man who sprang in and proceeded to bar the entrance behind him, an operation which the force of the wind rendered no easy matter.

"Well," he said, in a slightly peevish voice, "haven't you got any supper?"

"Waiting and ready," said his companion cheerily, pointing to a large pot which bubbled by the side of the fire. "You seem sort of damp."

"Damp be hanged! I'm soaked, man—thoroughly saturated. It's a night that I wouldn't have a dog out, at least not a dog that I had any respect for. Hand over that dry coat from the peg."

Jack Morgan, or Boss, as he was usually called, belonged to a type which was commoner in the mines during the flush times of the first great rush than would be supposed. He was a man of good blood, liberally educated, and a graduate of an English university. Boss should, in the natural course of things, have been an energetic curate, or struggling professional man, had not some latent traits cropped out in his character, inherited possibly from old Sir Henry Morgan, who had founded the family with Spanish pieces of eight gallantly won upon the high seas. It was this wild strain of blood, no doubt, which had caused him to drop from the bedroom window of the ivy-clad English parsonage, and leave home and friends behind him, to try his luck with pick and shovel in the Australian fields. In spite of his effeminate face and dainty man-

ners, the rough dwellers in Harvey's Sluice had gradually learned that the little man was possessed of a cool courage and unflinching resolution, which won respect in a community where pluck was looked upon as the highest of human attributes. No one ever knew how it was that Bones and he had become partners; yet partners they were, and the large, simple nature of the stronger man looked with an almost superstitious reverence upon the clear, decisive mind of his companion.

"That's better," said the Boss, as he dropped into the vacant chair before the fire, and watched Abe laying out the two metal plates. "Come here and sit down."

His gigantic partner came meekly over and perched himself upon the top of a barrel.

"What's up? he asked.

"Shares are up," said his companion. "That's what's up. Look here," and he extracted a crumpled paper from the pocket of the steaming coat. "Here's the Buckhurst *Sentinel*. Read this article—this one here about a paying lead in the Conemara mine. We hold pretty heavily in that concern, my boy. We might sell out and clear something—but I think we'll hold on."

Abe Durton in the mean time was laboriously spelling out the article in question, following the lines with his great forefinger, and muttering under his tawny moustache.

"Any news from Buckhurst?" asked Abe, rising and proceeding to extract their supper from the pot.

"Nothing much," said his companion. "Cock-eyed Joe has been shot by Billy Reid in McFarlane's store."

"Ah," said Abe, with listless interest.

"Bushrangers have been around and stuck up the Rochdale station. They say they are coming over here."

The miner whistled as he poured some whiskey into a jug.

"Anything more?" he asked.

"Nothing of importance, except that the blacks have been showing a bit down New Sterling way, and that the assayer has bought a piano, and is going to have

his daughter out from Melbourne to live in the new house opposite on the other side of the road. So you see we are going to have something to look at, my boy," he added, as he sat down, and began attacking the food set before him. "They say she is a beauty, Bones."

His partner suddenly dropped his knife and seemed to listen. Amid the wild uproar of the wind and the rain there was a low rumbling sound which was evidently not dependent upon the elements.

"What's that?"

"Darned if I know."

The two men made for the door and peered out earnestly into the darkness. Far away along the Buckhurst road they could see a moving light, and the dull sound was louder than before.

"It's a buggy coming down," said Abe.

"Where is it going to?"

"Don't know. Across the ford, I s'pose."

"Why, man, the ford will be six feet deep to-night, and running like a mill-stream."

The light was nearer now, coming rapidly round the curve of the road. There was a wild sound of galloping with the rattle of the wheels.

"Horses have bolted, by thunder!"

"Bad job for the man inside."

"If he don't pull 'em up before they reach the ford, he's a goner," remarked Abe Durton, resignedly.

Suddenly there came a lull in the sullen splash of the rain. It was but for a moment, but in that moment there came down on the breeze a long cry, which caused the two men to start and stare at each other, and then to rush frantically down the steep incline toward the road below.

"A woman, by heaven!" gasped Abe, as he sprang across the gaping shaft of a mine in the recklessness of his haste.

Morgan was the lighter and more active man. He drew away rapidly from his stalwart companion. Within a minute he was standing panting and bareheaded in

the middle of the soft, muddy road, while his partner was still toiling down the side of the declivity.

The carriage was close on him now. He could see in the light of the lamps the raw-boned Australian horse, as, terrified by the storm and by its own clatter, it came tearing down the declivity which led to the ford. The man who was driving seemed to see the pale face in the pathway in front of him, for he yelled out some incoherent words of warning, and made a last desperate attempt to pull up. There was a shout, an oath, and a jarring crash, and Abe, hurrying down, saw a wild, infuriated horse rearing madly in the air with a slim dark figure hanging on to its bridle. Boss, with the keen power of calculation which had made him the finest cricketer at Rugby in his day, had caught the rein immediately below the bit, and clung to it with silent concentration.

"Hold it, Bones," he said, as a tall figure hurled itself into the road and seized the other rein.

"All right, old man, I've got him"; and the horse, cowed by the sight of a fresh assailant, quieted down, and stood shivering with terror. "Get up, Boss, it's safe now."

But poor Boss lay groaning in the mud.

"I can't do it, Bones." There was a catch in the voice as of pain. "There's something wrong, old chap, but don't make a fuss. It's only a shake; give me a lift up."

Abe bent tenderly over his prostrate companion. He could see that he was very white, and breathing with difficulty.

"Cheer up, old Boss," he murmured. "Hullo! my stars!"

The last two exclamations were shot out of the honest miner's bosom as if they were impelled by some irresistible force, and he took a couple of steps backward in sheer amazement. There, at the other side of the fallen man, and half shrouded in the darkness, stood what appeared to Abe's simple soul to be the most beautiful vision that ever had appeared upon earth.

"Oh, papa," said the apparition, in great distress, "he is hurt—the gentleman is hurt"; and with a quick, feminine gesture of sympathy, she bent her lithe figure over Boss Morgan's prostrate figure.

"Why, it's Abe Durton and his partner," said the driver of the buggy, coming forward and disclosing the grizzled features of Mr. Joshua Sinclair, the assayer to the mines. "I don't know how to thank you, boys. The infernal brute got the bit between his teeth, and I should have had to throw Carrie out and chance it in another minute. That's right," he continued, as Morgan staggered to his feet. "Not much hurt, I hope."

"I can get up to the hut now," said the young man, steadying himself upon his partner's shoulder. "How are you going to get Miss Sinclair home?"

"Oh, we can walk," said that young lady, shaking off the effects of her fright with all the elasticity of youth.

"We can drive and take the road round the bank so as to avoid the ford," said her father. "The horse seems cowed enough now; you need not be afraid of it, Carrie. I hope we shall see you at the house, both of you. Neither of us can easily forget this night's work."

Miss Carrie said nothing, but she managed to shoot a little demure glance of gratitude from under her long lashes, to have won which honest Abe felt that he would have cheerfully undertaken to stop a runaway locomotive.

There was a cheery shout of "Good-night," a crack of the whip, and the buggy rattled away in the darkness.

"You told me the men were rough and nasty, pa," said Miss Carrie Sinclair, after a long silence, when the two dark shadows had died away in the distance, and the carriage was speeding along by the turbulent stream. "I don't think so. I think they are very nice." And Carrie was unusually quiet for the remainder of her journey, and seemed more reconciled to the hardship of leaving her dear friend Amelia in the far-off boarding school at Melbourne.

That did not prevent her from writing a full, true, and particular account of their little adventure to the same young lady upon that very night.

"They stopped the horse, darling, and one poor fellow was hurt. And oh, Amy, if you had seen the other one in a red shirt, with a pistol at his waist! I couldn't help thinking of you, dear. He was just your idea. You remember, a yellow moustache and great blue eyes. And how he did stare at poor me! You never see such men in Burke Street, Amy"; and so on, for four pages of pretty feminine gossip.

In the mean time poor Boss, badly shaken, had been helped up the hill by his partner and regained the shelter of the shanty. Abe doctored him out of the rude pharmacopœia of the camp, and bandaged up his strained arm.

II.

A casual visitor would have noticed a remarkable change in the conversation of this community. Somehow, when a certain dainty little bonnet, with a sweet, girlish figure beneath it, was seen in the distance among the disused shafts and mounds of red earth which disfigured the sides of the valley, there was a warning murmur, and a general clearing off of the cloud of blasphemy, which was, I regret to state, an habitual characteristic of the working population of Harvey's Sluice.

Abe had formerly been considered one of the most experienced valuators of an ore in the settlement. It had been commonly supposed that he was able to estimate the amount of gold in a fragment of quartz with remarkable exactness. This, however, was evidently a mistake, otherwise he would never have incurred the useless expense of having so many worthless specimens assayed as he now did. Mr. Joshua Sinclair found himself inundated with such a flood of fragments of mica, and lumps of rock containing decimal percentages of the precious metals, that he began to form a very low opinion of the young man's mining capabilities.

It is certain that, what with professional business in the morning and social visits at night, the tall figure of the miner was a familiar object in the little drawing-room of Azalea Villa, as the new house of the assayer had been magniloquently named. There was one cloud on Bones's horizon, and that was the periodical appearance of Black Tom Ferguson, of Rochdale Ferry. This clever young scamp had managed to ingratiate himself with old Joshua, and was a constant visitor at the villa. There were evil rumors abroad about Black Tom. He was known to be a gambler, and shrewdly suspected to be worse. Harvey's Sluice was not censorious, and yet there was a general feeling that Ferguson was a man to be avoided. Miss Carrie seemed to hail his appearance as a relief, and chattered away for hours about books and music and the gayeties of Melbourne. It was on these occasions that poor simple Bones would sink into the very lowest depths of despondency, and either slink away or sit glaring at his rival with an earnest malignancy which seemed to cause that gentleman no small amusement.

The miner made no secret to his partner of the admiration which he entertained for Miss Sinclair.

"That loafer from Rochdale," he said, "he seems to reel it off kinder nat'ral, while for the life of me I can't say a word. Tell me, Boss, what would *you* say to a girl like that?"

"Why, talk about what would interest her," said his companion.

"Ah, that's where it lies."

"Talk about the customs of the place and the country," said the Boss, pulling meditatively at his pipe. "Tell her stories of what you have seen in the mines, and that sort of thing."

"Eh? You'd do that, would you?" responded his comrade more hopefully. "If that's the hang of it, I am right. I'll go up now and tell her about Chicago Bill, an' how he put them two bullets in the man from the bend the night of the dance."

Boss Morgan laughed.

"That's hardly the thing," he said. "You'd frighten her if you told her that. Tell her something lighter, you know; something to amuse her, something funny."

"Funny?" said the anxious lover, with less confidence in his voice. "How you and me made Mat Houlahan drunk, and put him in the pulpit of the Baptist church, and he wouldn't let the preacher in in the morning. How would that do, eh?"

"For heaven's sake, don't say anything of the sort," said his mentor, in great consternation. "She'd never speak to either of us again. No, what I mean is that you should tell about the habits of the mines, how men live and work and die there. If she is a sensible girl that ought to interest her."

"How they live at the mines? Pard, you are good to me. How they live? There's a thing I can talk of as glib as Black Tom or any man. I'll try it on her when I see her."

"By the way," said his partner, listlessly, "just keep an eye on that man Ferguson. Watch what he does."

"I will," said his companion.

And he did. He watched him that very night—watched him stride out of the house of the assayer with anger and baffled pride on every feature of his handsome swarthy face; watched him clear the garden paling at a bound, pass in long rapid strides down the side of the valley, gesticulating wildly with his hands, and vanish into the bushland beyond. All this Abe Durton watched, and with a thoughtful look upon his face he relit his pipe and strolled slowly backward to the hut upon the hill.

III.

March was drawing to a close in Harvey's Sluice, and the glare and heat of the antipodean summer had toned down into the rich mellow hues of autumn.

On that particular morning the stream looked pretty as it meandered down the valley; pretty, too, was the long rising upland behind, with its luxuriant green covering; and prettiest of all was Miss Carrie Sinclair,

as she laid down her basket of ferns which she was carrying, and stopped upon the summit of the rising ground.

She stood for some time gazing at the view before her. She glanced at the great mysterious stretch of silent bushland beside her, and stooped to pick up her basket with the intention of hurrying along the road in the direction of the gulches. She started round, and hardly suppressed a scream as a long red-flannelled arm shot out from behind her, and withdrew the basket from her very grasp.

The figure which met her eye would to some have seemed little calculated to allay her fears. The high boots, the rough shirt, and the broad girdle with its weapons of death were, however, too familiar to Miss Carrie to be objects of terror; and when above them all she saw a pair of tender blue eyes looking down upon her, and a half-abashed smile lurking under a thick yellow moustache, she knew that for the remainder of that walk ranger and black would be equally powerless to harm her.

"Oh, Mr. Durton," she said, "how you did startle me!"

"I'm sorry, miss," said Abe, in great trepidation at having caused his idol one moment's uneasiness. "You see," he continued, with simple cunning, "the weather bein' fine and my partner gone prospectin', I thought I'd walk up to Hagley's Hill and round back by the bend, and there I sees you accidental-like and promiscuous a-standin' on a hillock."

They passed down the red pathway together, and along by the river's bank. Abe had relapsed into his normal condition of taciturnity. He had made one gallant effort to hold forth upon the subject of ferns, stimulated by the basket which he held in his hand; but the theme was not a thrilling one, and after a spasmodic flicker, he had abandoned the attempt.

Suddenly his conversation with his partner came back into his mind. What was it Boss had said upon the subject? "Tell her how they live at the mines." He revolved it in his brain. It seemed a curious thing

to talk about; but Boss had said it, and Boss was always right. He would take the plunge; so with a premonitory hem he blurted out:

"They live mostly on bacon and beans in the valley."

He could not see what effect this communication had upon his companion. He was too tall to be able to peer under the little straw bonnet. She did not answer. He would try again.

"Mutton on Sundays," he said.

Even this failed to arouse any enthusiasm. In fact, she seemed to be laughing. Boss was evidently wrong. The young man was in despair. The sight of a ruined hut beside the pathway conjured up a fresh idea. He grasped at it as a drowning man to a straw.

"Cockney Jack built that," he remarked. "Lived there till he died."

"What did he die of?" asked his companion.

"Three-star brandy," said Abe, decisively. "I used to come over of a night when he was bad and sit by him. Poor chap! he had a wife and two children in Putney. He'd rave, and call me Polly, by the hour. He was cleaned out, hadn't a red cent; but the boys collected rough gold enough to see him through. He's buried there in that shaft; that was his claim, so we just dropped him down it an' filled it up. Put down his pick too, an' a spade an' a bucket, so's he'd feel kinder perky and at home."

Miss Carrie seemed more interested now.

"Do they often die like that?" she asked.

"Well, brandy kills many; but there's more gets dropped—shot, you know."

"I don't mean that. Do many men die alone and miserable down there, with no one to care for them?" and she pointed to the cluster of houses beneath them. "Is there any one dying now? It is awful to think of."

"There's none as I knows on likely to throw up their hand."

"I wish you wouldn't use so much slang, Mr. Durton," said Carrie. "You know it isn't polite. You should get a dictionary and learn the proper words."

"Ah, that's it," said Bones, apologetically. "It's gettin' your hand on the proper one. When you've not got a steam drill, you've got to put up with the pick."

"Yes, but it's easy if you really try. You could say that a man was 'dying,' or 'moribund,' if you like."

"That's it," said the miner enthusiastically. "'Moribund!' That's a word. Why, you could lay over Boss Morgan in the matter of words. 'Moribund!' There's some sound about that."

Carrie laughed.

"It's not the sound you must think of, but whether it will express your meaning. Seriously, Mr. Durton, if any one should be ill in the camp, you must let me know. I can nurse, and I might be of use. You will, won't you?"

"And now I must say good-morning," said Carrie, as they came to the spot where a crooked pathway branched off from the track and wound up to Azalea Villa. "Thank you ever so much for escorting me."

So poor Bones departed in a mixture of many opposite feelings. He had interested her. She had spoken kindly to him. But then she had sent him away before there was any necessity; she couldn't care much about him if she would do that. I think he might have felt a little more cheerful, however, had he seen Miss Carrie Sinclair as she watched his retiring figure from the garden gate with a loving look upon her saucy face, and a mischievous smile at his bent head and despondent appearance.

IV.

The Colonial Bar was the favorite haunt of the inhabitants of Harvey's Sluice in their hours of relaxation. There had been a fierce competition between it and the rival establishment termed the Grocery, which, in spite of its innocent appellation, aspired also to dispense spirituous refreshments. The importation of chairs into the latter had led to the appearance of a settee in the former. Spittoons appeared in the Grocery against a picture in the Bar, and, as the frequent-

ers expressed it, the honors were even. When, however, the Grocery led a window-curtain, and its opponent returned a snuggery and a mirror, the game was declared to be in favor of the latter, and Harvey's Sluice showed its sense of the spirit of the proprietor by withdrawing its custom from his opponent.

Though every man was at liberty to swagger into the bar itself, and bask in the shimmer of its many-colored bottles, there was a general feeling that the snuggery, or special apartment, should be reserved for the use of the more prominent citizens. On this particular evening there was an assemblage of notabilities in the snuggery. The rangers were the present subject of discussion. For some few days rumors of their presence had been flying about, and an uneasy feeling had pervaded the colony.

A fresh impetus had been given to the panic by the report just brought in by Jim Struggles. Jim was of an ambitious and aspiring turn of mind, and after gazing in silent disgust at his last week's clean-up, he had metaphorically shaken the clay of Harvey's Sluice from his feet, and had started off into the woods with the intention of prospecting round until he could hit upon some likely piece of ground for himself. Jim's story was that he was sitting upon a fallen trunk eating his mid-day damper and rusty bacon, when his trained ear had caught the clink of horse's hoofs. He had hardly time to take the precaution of rolling off the tree and crouching down behind it, before a troop of men came riding down through the bush, and passed within a stone-throw of him.

"There was Bill Smeaton and Murphy Duff," said Struggles, naming two notorious ruffians; "and there was three more that I couldn't rightly see. And they took the trail to the right, and looked like business all over, with their guns in their hands."

Jim was submitted to a searching cross-examination that evening; but nothing could shake his testimony or throw a further light upon what he had seen.

There were a few, however, who were loudly scepti-

cal as to the existence of the rangers, and the most prominent of these was a young man who was perched on a barrel in the centre of the room, and was evidently one of the leading spirits in the community. We have already seen that dark curling hair, lack-lustre eye, and thin cruel lip, in the person of Black Tom Ferguson, the rejected suitor of Miss Sinclair.

"It's always the same," he said; "if a man meets a few travellers in the bush, he's bound to come back raving about rangers. If they'd seen Struggles there, they would have gone off with a long yarn about a ranger crouching behind a tree. As to recognizing people riding fast among tree trunks—it is an impossibility."

Something seemed to be on his mind, too; for occasionally he would spring off his perch and pace up and down the room with an abstracted and very forbidding look upon his swarthy face. It was a relief to every one when, suddenly catching up his hat, and wishing the company a curt "Good-night," he walked off through the bar, and into the street beyond.

"Seems kinder put out," remarked Long McCoy.

"He can't be afeard of the rangers, surely," said Joe Shamus, another man of consequence, and principal shareholder of the El Dorado.

"No, he's not the man to be afraid," answered another. "There's something queer about him the last day or two. He's been long trips in the woods without any tools. They do say that the assayer's daughter has chucked him over."

"Quite right, too. A darned sight too good for him," remarked several voices.

"It's odds but he has another try," said Shamus. "He's a hard man to beat when he's set his mind on a thing."

"Abe Durton's the horse to win," remarked Houlahan, a little, bearded Irishman. "It's sivin to four I'd be willin' to lay on him."

"And you'd be afther losing your money, a-vich," said a young man with a laugh. "She'll want more brains than ever Bones had in his skull, you bet."

"Who's seen Bones to-day?" asked McCoy.

"I've seen him," said the young miner. "He came round all through the camp asking for a dictionary—wanted to write a letter likely."

"I saw him readin' it," said Shamus. "He came over to me an' told me he'd struck something good at the first show. Showed me a word about as long as your arm—'abdicate,' or something."

"It's a rich man he is now, I suppose," said the Irishman.

"Well, he's about made his pile. He holds a hundred feet of the Conemara, and the shares go up every hour. If he'd sell out, he'd be about fit to go home."

"Guess he wants to take somebody home with him," said another. "Old Joshua wouldn't object, seein' that the money is there."

I think it has been already recorded in this narrative that Jim Struggles, the wandering prospector, had gained the reputation of being the wit of the camp. He had been brooding in silence over some idea since the departure of Ferguson, and he now proceeded to evolve it to his expectant companions.

"Say, boys," he began. "It's the first o' April. I've got a calendar in the hut as says so."

"What if it is?" said several voices.

"Well, don't you see, it's All Fools' Day. Couldn't we fix up some little joke on some one, eh? Couldn't we get a laugh out of it? Now there's old Bones, for instance; he'll never smell a rat. Couldn't we send him off somewhere and watch him go, maybe? We'd have something to chaff him on for a month to come, eh?"

"Where shall we send him?" was the query.

Jim Struggles was buried in thought for a moment. Then an unhallowed inspiration seemed to come over him, and he laughed uproariously, rubbing his hands between his knees in the excess of his delight.

"Well, what is it?" asked the eager audience.

"See here, boys. There's Miss Sinclair. You was saying as Abe's gone on her. She don't fancy him

much, you think. Suppose we write him a note—send it him to-night, you know."

"Well, what then?" said McCoy.

"Well, pretend the note is from her, d'ye see? Put her name at the bottom. Let on as she wants him to come an' meet her in the garden at twelve. He's bound to go. He'll think she wants to go off with him. It'll be the biggest thing played this year."

There was a roar of laughter. The plan was approved of unanimously.

"Here's pencil and here's paper," said the humorist. "Who's goin' to write the letter!"

"Write it yourself, Jim," said Shamus.

"Well, what shall I say?"

"Say what you think right."

"I don't know how she'd put it," said Jim, scratching his head in great perlexity. "However, Bones will never know the differ. How will this do? 'Dear old man. Come to the garden at twelve to-night, else I'll never speak to you again,' eh?"

"No, that's not the style," said the young miner. "Mind, she's a lass of eddication. She'd put it kinder flowery and soft."

"Well, write it yourself," said Jim sulkily, handing him over the pencil.

"This is the sort of thing," said the miner, moistening the point of it in his mouth. "'When the moon is in the sky——'"

"There it is. That's bully," from the company.

"'And the stars a-shinin' bright, meet, O meet me, Adolphus, by the garden-gate at twelve.'"

"His name ain't Adolphus," objected a critic.

"That's how the poetry comes in," said the miner. "It's kinder fanciful, d'ye see. Sounds a darned sight better than Abe. Trust him for guessing who she means. I'll sign it Carrie. There!"

This epistle was gravely passed round the room from hand to hand, and reverentially gazed upon as being a remarkable production of the human brain. It was then folded up and committed to the care of a small

boy, who was solemnly charged, under dire threats, to deliver it at the shanty, and to make off before any awkward questions were asked him. It was only after he had disappeared in the darkness that some slight compunction visited one or two of the company.

"Ain't it playing it rather low on the girl?" said Shamus.

"And rough on old Bones?" suggested another.

However, these objections were overruled by the majority, and disappeared entirely upon the appearance of a second jorum of whiskey. The matter had almost been forgotten by the time that Abe had received his note, and was spelling it out with a palpitating heart under the light of his solitary candle.

V.

That night has long been remembered in Harvey's Sluice. A fitful breeze was sweeping down from the distant mountains, moaning and sighing among the deserted claims. A great loneliness seemed to rest on the face of nature. Men remarked afterward on the strange eerie atmosphere which hung over the little town.

It was in the darkness that Abe Durton sallied out from his little shanty. His partner, Boss Morgan, was still absent in the bush, so that, beyond the ever-watchful Blinky, there was no living being to observe his movements. A feeling of mild surprise filled his simple soul that his angel's delicate fingers could have formed those great straggling hieroglyphics; however, there was the name at the foot, and that was enough for him. She wanted him, no matter for what, and with a heart as pure and as heroic as any knight-errant, this rough miner went forth at the summons of his love.

He groped his way up the steep winding track which led to Azalea Villa. The miner paused under the shade of the trees, and then moved on to the garden-gate. There was no one there. He was evidently rather early. The moon was shining brightly now, and the country round was as clear as day. Abe looked past

the little villa at the road which ran like a white winding streak over the brow of the hill. A watcher behind could have seen his square athletic figure standing out sharp and clear. Then he gave a start as if he had been shot, and staggered up against the little gate beside him.

He had seen something which caused even his sunburned face to become a shade paler as he thought of the girl so near him. Just at the bend of the road, not two hundred yards away, he saw a dark moving mass coming round the curve, and lost in the shadow of the hill. It was but for a moment; yet in that moment the quick perception of the practised woodman had realized the whole situation. It was a band of horsemen bound for the villa; and what horsemen would ride so by night save the terror of the woodlands—the dreaded rangers of the bush?

It is true that on ordinary occasions Abe was as sluggish in his intellect as he was heavy in his movements. In the hour of danger, however, he was as remarkable for cool deliberation as for prompt and decisive action. As he advanced up the garden, he rapidly reckoned up the chances against him. There were half a dozen of the assailants, at the most moderate computation, all desperate and fearless men. The question was whether he could keep them at bay for a short time and prevent their forcing a passage into the house. We have already mentioned that sentinels had been placed in the main street of the town. Abe reckoned that help would be at hand within ten minutes of the firing of the first shot.

Were he inside the house, he could confidently reckon on holding his own for a longer period than that. Before he could rouse the sleepers and gain admission, however, the rangers would be upon him. He must content himself with doing his utmost. At any rate he would show Carrie that, if he could not talk to her, he could at least die for her.

The road along which the rangers were coming ended at a wooden gate opening into the upper part of the

assayer's little garden. This gate had a high acacia hedge on either side of it, and opened into a short walk also lined by impassable thorny walls. Abe knew the place well. One resolute man might, he thought, hold the passage for a few minutes until the assailants broke through elsewhere and took him in the rear. At any rate, it was his best chance. He passed the front door, but forbore to give any alarm. Sinclair was an elderly man, and would be of little assistance in such a desperate struggle as was before him, and the appearance of lights in the house would warn the rangers of the resistance awaiting them. Oh, for his partner, the Boss, for Chicago Bill, for any one of twenty gallant men who would have come to his call and stood by him in such a quarrel! He turned into the narrow wooden pathway. There was the well-remembered wooden gate, and there, perched upon the gate, languidly swinging his legs backward and forward, and peering down the road in front of him, was Mr. John Morgan, the very man for whom Abe had been longing from the bottom of his heart. There was short time for explanations. A few hurried words announced that the Boss, returning from his little tour, had come across the rangers riding on their mission of darkness, and, overhearing their destination, had managed by hard running and knowledge of the country to arrive before them. "No time to alarm any one," he explained, still panting from his exertions; "must stop them ourselves; not come for swag—come for your girl. Only over our bodies, Bones"; and with these few broken words the strangely assorted friends shook hands, and looked lovingly into each other's eyes, while the tramp of the horses came down to them on the fragrant breeze of the woods.

There were six rangers in all. One, who appeared to be leader, rode in front, while the others followed in a body. They flung themselves off their horses when they were opposite the house, and after a few muttered words from their captain, tethered the animals to a small tree, and walked confidently toward the gate.

Boss Morgan and Abe were crouching down under the shadow of the hedge, at the extreme end of the narrow passage. They were invisible to the rangers, who evidently reckoned on meeting little resistance in this isolated house. As the first man came forward and half turned to give some order to his comrades, both the friends recognized the stern profile and heavy moustache of Black Ferguson, the rejected suitor of Miss Carrie Sinclair. Honest Abe made a mental vow that he at least should never reach the door alive.

The ruffian stepped up to the gate and put his hand upon the latch. He started as a stentorian "Stand back!" came thundering out from among the bushes. In war, as in love, the miner was a man of few words.

"There's no road this way," explained another voice with an infinite sadness and gentleness about it which was characteristic of its owner when the devil was rampant in his soul. The ranger recognized it. He remembered the soft languid address which he had listened to in the billiard-room of the Buckhurst Arms, and which had wound up by the mild orator putting his back against the door, drawing a derringer, and asking to see the sharper who would dare to force a passage. "It's that infernal fool Durton," he said, "and his white-faced friend."

Both were well-known names in the country round. But the rangers were reckless and desperate men. They drew up to the gate in a body.

"Clear out of that!" said their leader in a grim whisper; "you can't save the girl. Go off with whole skins, while you have the chance."

The partners laughed.

"Then, curse you, come on!"

The gate was flung open and the party fired a straggling volley, and made a fierce rush toward the graveled walk.

The revolvers cracked merrily in the silence of the night from the bushes at the other end. It was hard to aim with precision in the darkness. The second man sprang convulsively into the air, and fell upon his

face, with his arms extended, writhing horribly in the moonlight. The third was grazed in the leg and stopped. The others stopped out of sympathy. After all, the girl was not for them, and their heart was hardly in the work. Their captain rushed madly on, like a valiant blackguard as he was, but was met by a crashing blow from the butt of Abe Durton's pistol, delivered with a fierce energy which sent him reeling back among his comrades with the blood streaming from his shattered jaw, and his capacity for cursing cut short at the very moment when he needed to draw upon it most.

"Don't go yet," said the voice in the darkness.

However, they had no intention of going yet. A few minutes must elapse, they knew, before Harvey's Sluice could be upon them. There was still time to force the door if they could succeed in mastering the defenders. What Abe had feared came to pass. Black Ferguson knew the ground as well as he did. He ran rapidly along the hedge, and the five crashed through it where there was some appearance of a gap. The two friends glanced at each other. Their flank was turned. They stood up like men who knew their fate and did not fear to meet it.

There was a wild medley of dark figures in the moonlight, and a ringing cheer from well-known voices. The humorists of Harvey's Sluice had found something even more practical than the joke which they had come to witness. The partners saw the faces of friends beside them—Shamus, Struggles, M'Coy. There was a desperate rally, a sweeping fiery rush, a cloud of smoke, with pistol shots and fierce oaths ringing out of it, and when it lifted, a single dark shadow flying for dear life to the shelter of the broken hedge was the only ranger upon his feet within the little garden. But there was no sound of triumph among the victors; a strange hush had come over them, and a murmur as of grief—for there, lying across the threshold which he had fought so gallantly to defend, lay poor Abe, the loyal and simple-hearted, breathing heavily with a bullet through his lungs.

He was carried inside with all the rough tenderness of the mines. There were men there, I think, who would have borne his hurt to have had the love of that white girlish figure, which bent over the blood-stained bed and whispered so softly and so tenderly in his ear. Her voice seemed to rouse him. He opened his dreamy blue eyes and looked about him. They rested on her face.

"Played out," he murmured; "pardon, Carrie, morib——" and with a faint smile he sank back upon the pillow.

However, Abe failed for once to be as good as his word. His hardy constitution asserted itself, and he shook off what might in a weaker man have proved a deadly wound. Whether it was the balmy air of the woodlands which came sweeping over a thousand miles of forest into the sick man's room, or whether it was the little nurse who tended him so gently, certain it is that within two months we heard that he had realized his shares in the Conemara, and gone from Harvey's Sluice and the little shanty upon the hill forever.

I had the advantage a short time afterward of seeing an extract from the letter of a young lady named Amelia, to whom we have made a casual allusion in the course of our narrative. We have already broken the privacy of one feminine epistle, so we shall have fewer scruples in glancing at another. "I was bridemaid," she remarks, "and Carrie looked charming" (underlined) "in the veil and orange-blossoms. Such a man he is—twice as big as your Jack, and he was so funny, and blushed and dropped the prayer-book. And when they asked the question, you could have heard him roar 'I do!' at the other end of George Street. His best man was a darling" (twice underlined). "So quiet and handsome and nice. Too gentle to take care of himself among those rough men, I am sure." I think it quite possible that in the fulness of time Miss Amelia managed to take upon herself the care of our old friend Mr. Jack Morgan, commonly known as the Boss.

This pretty story of a monarch's kindness is translated from the Italian of "Djalma" for ROMANCE by Alma Lazzari.

KING HUMBERT AND THE FLOOD.

SEPTEMBER has many lovers. Its cool, clear days are a refreshment to poor humanity, after it has borne patiently (or impatiently) with the blazing August sun. Everybody gladly leaves the Alps or the sea-side to return to the plain, where the trees hang full of luscious fruit and where the grapes weigh the vines almost to the ground.

All know Verona, with its monuments and its glorious old palaces; and who does not like its wines and peaches? Never had there been a more promising year than 1882. Every one was rejoicing, and even the poor were looking forward to a small share in the good harvest of the rich.

A stone-cutter was living in a poor, very poor, two-story house, not far from Verona, on the Adige. No one sees the Adige for the first time without some sensation of fear. It looks so angry, with its muddy water, rushing past, as if it hunted after some fleeing criminal. But the stone-cutter had no such fear. All he cared for was to have a roof for his wife and three children, and he was proud to own those four walls, which he called his home. His wife was a gentle, good woman, and might have been very helpful to him; but unfortunately a sick child kept her at home, and she could only assist her husband by being neat and economical,—if extreme poverty can be economical.

Two boys did their best to aid the father and mother, and in their small way succeeded in earning a few pennies here and there. One had found a purse one day, and hastened with it to Verona, where he had deposited it in the hands of the police. The reward given had helped buy a good bed for the little invalid,

and it seemed a godsend. And now this year, in their make-believe little garden, a few vines were bearing grapes, oh, so beautiful, so near ripe! The boys would not touch one of those grapes. They were all, all to be for Maria the invalid. The boys actually believed the grapes might cure their little sister.

But this September of '82 began with rain. It rained and rained, and suddenly a cry of terror struck the whole Venetian territory, and part of Lombardy. The inundations had begun. The rivers rose from hour to hour, and the night, the night of horrors came when the Adige left its bed and rushed wildly through country and city, carrying with it all that attempted to hinder its wild course. Ruins of all kinds were floating, animals in a last attempt at saving themselves, beds, tables, trees—all passed showing the terrible ravages of the angry flood. The country was one vast lake. Trains had ceased running, bridges had crumbled, and no telegram could be sent to soothe anxious hearts. Nothing but destruction was to be seen everywhere between Venice and Verona. Troops were sent to help; boats came from all parts, and everybody lent a hand to aid the half-distracted population. The king hurried to the unhappy cities, and he was seen helping and encouraging soldiers and officers. The houses nearest the river were naturally the most in danger. The misfortune came so quickly and so unexpectedly that even the stone-cutter had left home in the morning for his work which lay at quite a distance from his house. Late in the afternoon he heard the terrible tale from a soldier, who was passing rapidly with a message. The poor man stood for a moment, paralyzed with terror and gazing helplessly at the gray sky. Would he reach his house in time? "Oh, my poor, poor wife!"

A hot, burning tear rolled over his blanched face. He tried to walk, but he was almost as powerless as his little Maria. Sinking on his knees, he prayed with his whole heart: "Oh, help us, good God!"

As if his prayer had been heard, the sound of a carriage came distinctly to him. When it reached him,

his hands went up in a desperately pleading gesture to the two gentlemen sitting in it. Without waiting for the horses to stop, one of them jumped out and, lifting the poor man up, asked: "What is it?"

The stone-cutter in a few words told his anxiety. Before he had finished, the gentlemen had helped the poor man into the carriage, which had come to a halt, and making him sit near the coachman said: "Tell him where you live,"—and he added: "*Presto*, Piero, go as fast as your horses will go." What had seemed impossible to the stone-cutter, was easy work for the two beautiful horses. But soon the wheels were half-covered by water, and as far as the eye could reach was water, nothing but water.

The heart of the wretched father became again utterly hopeless. He covered his eyes, in order not to see such desolation. Suddenly, mingled with the noise of the water, he heard cries for help. Looking up he saw a woman struggling through the water and trying to hold a little child above it. A sharp "Stop!" and in a moment his benefactor was half-wading, half-swimming through the flood, and in a few minutes the exhausted woman was lifted with her child into the carriage. A few yards further on, and with a cry of pleasure the stone-cutter saw his own house in the distance. But his joy was very short. The water had reached the first story and would soon reach the second, even if the house stood firm. If only a boat were at hand!

"Unharness one horse, Piero," ordered the master of the carriage, and then turning to his companion, an officer with whom he had been exchanging words of deep interest and anxiety all the time, he said in a friendly, but decided tone: "You will ride to Verona, Count, and order a boat to come this way at once."

The count jumped immediately from the carriage, mounted a horse and fairly flew over the flooded street. Meanwhile the sharp eyes of the poor father had more guessed than seen three figures on the roof of the house. He suddenly thought of his little Maria, who usually

lay in the first-floor room, and a cold chill struck him to the heart. Yes, there were three figures on the roof, all of them shouting for help. His Maria, his sweet little girl, must be lost, drowned in that terrible water, which seemed to rise every minute!

He turned his pale face to the inside of the carriage. He saw how the gentleman had taken off his overcoat and was wrapping in it the mother and child, whom he had saved, and was trying to comfort her. She was telling how she had come out to gather herbs for a drug-store and had suddenly been surprised by the waters. She fled, until she felt her drenched skirt drawing her down to sure death. "And now," she said, "I am saved, saved with my angel!" and kissing the child passionately, she looked gratefully at her saviour. But he scarcely heard her, for he was now standing up, watching intently for the boat, which though it had to come from Verona, up the river, against the rushing current, must soon reach the spot. The water was invading the second floor of the house, and a cry of terror came from the man, who was almost losing his mind at seeing his dear ones so menaced.

"Courage, my man, courage! I see the boat coming," the gentleman exclaimed. And so it was. Six soldiers were rowing with all their might against the fury of the torrent. A man stood in their midst, leading and directing their efforts. But, oh, what slow progress! Will they never reach the house? Will the angry river get its prey? Will his dear ones die before the eyes of the distracted father?

They all stand up in the carriage, watching every stroke of the soldiers, breathless, unable even to utter a sound. The water rises, rises, and they see the woman bend in terror over the border of the roof, as if to calculate how long the agony is to last. The horse neighs and in the distance another neighing is heard. It is a soldier returning with the missing horse.

"There is danger!" he calls. "Turn the carriage!"

But his call is not heard and receives no response. A white, agonized face turns from the house. It has

seen the boat. It is just high enough for the boys to jump in, but no; they refuse, and so does the mother. The house seems to shake under the power of the water. But what is that? Two soldiers leave the oars—one jumps on the shoulder of the other, and with a sign seems to say that he is steady. The leader climbs easily upon this human pole and reaches the roof with a daring jump. He bends and, lifting a form from it, gives some orders to the soldiers. A cord is thrown to him. He ties it strongly to the chimney, and then begins the dangerous descent. But he is young and brave, and God helps the brave. The little girl is tenderly deposited in the boat. He returns once more; the mother wants her other children saved first. Lastly he descends with her own slight weight supported by his arm. Looking up he gives rapid orders. The oars fall in the water, and now the current carries them rapidly toward the carriage.

The soldier meanwhile has harnessed the horse. At a distance, the boat stops. The water is too shallow to row further. The young officer unhesitatingly jumps out, and half-wading, half-swimming, reaches the carriage.

"For heaven's sake, Piero," he cries, "ride as fast as you can!"

Then turning to the stone-cutter, "The soldiers will take your family to Verona to the hospital. We will find them there."

But the water is deep. The horses are frightened, and it takes all the skill of the old coachman to reach the dry part of the road. A loud crash behind them makes them shiver. The house is gone; they all know it. The stone-cutter sits as if stunned; he hears and sees nothing. Can he ever forget the agony of this day! And the poor woman holds her baby tighter to her breast wondering who this powerful saviour is. Soon they reach Verona, and the hospital, and the young officer helps the woman to alight, speaking, as he does so, a few words hurriedly to the janitor. The man looks up and, taking off his cap, he directs the

woman where to go to get dry clothes. She turns to thank her benefactor, but he is looking sadly away, and she dares not speak.

The stone-cutter descends and, hat in hand, he says only: "Grazia." His heart is full, for he sees his wife coming up the street, followed by a soldier carrying a little form tenderly wrapped in his jacket. The boys rush up, and before he can speak again the carriage with the two gentlemen has left.

The next day a man-servant inquires after the whole family in the hospital and leaves an envelope for the happy father. It holds a yellow banknote—five hundred francs! The poor stone-cutter wishes he could thank his benefactor, but he remains unknown to him. Perhaps, if he should go to Rome some day, he might find him in King Humbert's palace. If not there, he will be sure to find him where Italy is suffering.

This intense and subtle study in psychology, in the form of a beautiful story, full of color and action, could only be from the pen of Mrs. Harriet Prescott Spofford. It is a pity that every portrait-painter cannot afford to "paint in" his subject's real character. One chooses to believe that the hero and heroine of Mrs. Spofford's little drama were able, after all, to conclude it in the conventional way.

A PORTRAIT.

It is a theory of mine that one cannot paint a good portrait from mere sittings of the subject before one. The nature, as well as the features of the model, must require study. One should know something of the soul as well as of the superficies. And so, as I was to paint the portrait of Mrs. Adriance, a woman of rare charm, I felt the necessity of some careful observation. Her guest for the purpose, I had, of course, the better opportunity of making it; and the hospitality, being a matter of business, hardly invested me with the sacred character of guest, or invested her with any of the shielding that should ordinarily surround one's hostess.

Mrs. Adriance was a woman of luxurious beauty, and of a toilette that was its fit setting. If I say that her husband was her slave, I have no word left to describe the condition of her servants; but in her house, which was superb, she reigned an unlimited despot, and her word, her wish, was law. She had many whims, each of which she followed till she worked it out and there was no shred of it left; now it was charity, now it was religion, now it was fashion, now it was literature, now it was art. Whatever whim she pursued borrowed for the time some of the beauty of the beautiful creature who pursued it, and seemed as admirable as she was, as all she did was,—at least in the eyes of Mr. Adriance. In my own eyes—well, beginning as her abject servant, I had spent but a few days under her roof when I found myself thinking that, if I painted Mrs.

Adriance as I saw her, the picture would be unpleasant enough to exceed the domain of art.

Nothing opens the eyes sometimes like a good prejudice. If I had not become aware of Mrs. Adriance's opposition to the marriage of her husband's niece for no other reason than that the girl was agreeable to herself, a pleasant piece of furniture in the house, and she did not choose to make a break in the way of life which she enjoyed, I might not have seen her so clearly myself. No one played Chopin as this sensitive Irene did; no one else read verses with the same delicate inflections and musical voice; no one sympathized with her in all her freaks and caprices as this young girl did; no one had such taste to criticise and suggest concerning a ribbon or a ruffle, and let Irene's fingers twinkle for a moment in the lace or among the puffs and bows and no French milliner could have done better. It was plainly impossible for Mrs. Adriance to spare Irene. Who would see the point of the last social gossip with her? With whom should she exchange the swift glance? With whom should she talk over her friends and enemies? Life would be coming to an end soon enough, anyway; let things be as they were till sickness and age and death touch them with necessary transforming hand; why go out of the way and bring about unpleasant changes. No; let Irene stay where she was well off and made others so. "And why did Irene wish to marry, anyway?" she would continue. "It would only be a temporary delight and after that, weariness." Doubtless very much in love now,—in a year the enchantment would be gone and the bridal satin would be only sackcloth and ashes. No, it was as much for Irene's sake as for that of every one else that Mrs. Adriance opposed the whole affair.

And then the man was poor. It was true that was a trouble which Mrs. Adriance could remedy if she would, out of her abundant wealth; but if Irene chose to throw herself away, not a dollar, not a cent, would Mrs. Adriance contribute toward her doing so; she, at any rate, would not make herself responsible for help-

ing on the sacrifice. Besides—see how selfish it was in Irene! How singularly selfish to wish to leave this home where she was so acceptable, so agreeable, actually so necessary, where an aunt valued her as few women did their husband's relatives, where her uncle found her of such use, where she filled all the chinks and corners, where nothing could replace her or make up for her loss—how very selfish in her to wish to go off with a young man who must needs absorb her entirely to himself! She couldn't really believe such selfishness was possible to Irene, and therefore she couldn't really believe that Irene positively wished to marry the young man. And if she didn't wish it, what was the use of talking any more about it? It was not a matter of genuine love, but a mere phase of sentimentality. And how did that old pink accord with the tarnished gold, and what did you say to this cloth for a riding habit—scarlet velvet full of silver gray shadows? One has to be so careful in the choice of hues after one has passed one's first youth; and scarlet is certainly vulgarizing unless one's skin is transparent as moonlight. And hers was? Yes, there was perhaps nothing out of the way in confessing it; a fact in nature that was patent to any observer was hardly a matter of personal vanity; and she was willing to admit she had found pleasure in her coloring, as the glass gave it back to her—the pleasure she might find in looking at a Correggio,—Irene had often told her she looked like a painting on ivory; and it was certainly very unusual at forty. An even temper had a great deal to do with such preservation by keeping up a regular circulation—a refusal to be ruffled by trifles, a habit of putting aside the unpleasant, such, for instance, as this disagreeable affair of Irene's marriage. And, for the rest, how could Irene expect to be happy with a man of such a nature as Gervais's? She had really put it to Irene. What manner of man was it who was willing to take her from her home of luxury, surrounded by the beauty of a palace, waited on by liveried servants, fed on all but nectar and ambrosia, to live in narrow lodgings, to

wait on herself and him, too, to dine on the joint warmed over, if there was even a joint at all! He must be a person both without calculation and without heart,—without calculation certainly to foresee the want and work and worry to which he should bring her,—without heart, to be willing to accept such a sacrifice from her. What happiness could she expect in life with so selfish a creature as that? Or, on the other hand, if he had calculation—if he thought that, by securing Irene, he was also putting himself in the way of securing a portion of her uncle's money—well, then, he was warned in time. Not a dollar under such circumstances would be given to Irene; the whole fortune would be applied to Institutional Charities; and this was irrevocable, and he might as well understand it now as any time! He did understand it, perfectly. "You can't think all that your aunt has said," he asked, eagerly, "can make any difference?"

"Oh, no," sighed Irene, "oh no, none, none in—our —love."

"In what then?" he demanded, his splendid gray eyes glittering like a young eagle's. "Does happiness depend on velvet carpets and gilt chairs and Dresden china figures? Upon a course of game or sweetmeats, or the right wines? Upon Paris hats and dresses?"

"Oh, no, no," sighed Irene again. "Why do you speak so?"

"I am sorry to speak so abruptly, my darling," he said, returning to her side. "But if your happiness lies in none of these things, then our life together can be blest enough. My salary will provide a home, and its simplicity——"

"Would be dear to me!" cried Irene. "Oh, it's not that. It's none of these things! But she has been so good to me, always so sweet and kind and anxious for my happiness, as every one sees, and she needs me so —and I cannot find it in my heart to pain her——"

"But you can pain me!" he cried, starting to his feet again. "It amounts to this, then, that you love her more than me!"

"Oh, no, no," cried Irene again, breaking down in sobs. "That is impossible! And I can't see—I don't feel—I don't know what to do!"

She, too, it was plain, shared the general worship and absorption. "She has cast her eyes upon you!" exclaimed Gervais. "The basilisk!" And so things drifted on, apparently remaining much as before. But there are always currents underneath the tide.

My eminence as a portrait-painter—not to put too fine a point on it—allowed me to work unquestioned, and at my own time. And as Mrs. Adriance knew my ideas concerning the necessity of studying the character of my sitter, she revealed herself on one occasion after this semi-confidential fashion. Thus I did not feel called upon to show her my sketches for her picture, nor the outlines of Irene that I made furtively, finding it not easy to obtain the precise transparency of tint beside which the sea-shell's pink was opaque, my pencil fascinated, too, with the exquisite droop of eye and lip where all melancholy seemed to linger.

But while I was still pursuing my studies, Mrs. Adriance was evolving new opportunities for them.

"It is really out of the question," she said, "to allow things to go on in this way any longer, Irene. There is no state much worse than a prolonged engagement; it would unsettle the mind of a college faculty. One can attend to no duties properly, with all one's interest elsewhere. It keeps one in a condition of bristling electricity.

"You are absorbed and abstracted in Gervais now, and I feel it. We all feel it. One must bring the matter to an end, either by marriage or by dismissal. And in this case, Irene, I am sure your good sense will direct you as to the proper course."

"Oh!" cried Irene, all the pink flush mounting and deepening and then dying away in deadly pallor. "You can't mean——"

"Yes, assuredly," said Mrs. Adriance, calmly opening and shutting her great fan of crimson ostrich feath-

ers. "I mean that your wisest way is to tell Gervais to cease to see you or care for you."

"As if—as if he could!" cried Irene, in a burst of passion which was like a revelation.

"My dear! Such vehemence! I could not believe you capable of the shocking taste of it. Surely it is best that Gervais should make the effort. You who are usually so self-forgetful—it surprises me that you should fail to see the injury you are doing Gervais by the continuance of this hopeless affair. He is simply wasting his youth and all his young manhood, and the happiness he might secure elsewhere, by marrying a young woman in his own station of life."

"His own station?" cried Irene, trembling like an aspen leaf. "Is that not the same as ours?"

"Oblige me, Irene, by not repeating my words. It strikes me there is a difference between your uncle's position with his rank and influence and social weight —to say nothing of myself—and that of a penniless clerk on a salary! It might strike another so. There is a difference. If Gervais married a person accustomed to no more than he could give, he would have a chance for happiness, a reason for saving his salary, a home that would interest him and occupy him and prevent his rushing to dissipation,"—one could see that every word went through Irene like a stab. "Don't make me any reply, my dear. But when you go to your room, think of it calmly, judicially, with an eye to Gervais's best good, as I have, and I am sure you can come but to one decision. I would not see him again. I would return his letters, his trifling gifts, and put an end to the whole vexatious business at once. Now if you will open the 'Sign of the Lyre,'—where were you? That 'Story from a Dictionary,' wasn't it?"

As the King said, so was it done.

I was toying with my pencils a day or two afterward, when Mrs. Adriance came up, and rang presently for Irene, who brought in her hand a book containing some fanciful arabesque designs which Mrs. Adriance wished

me to see. The book was "The Thousand Nights and One Night."

Mrs. Adriance threw herself back in the depths of the wicker chair, unwinding the scarf and lace she had on her head. "Now I am your sitter, sir," she said. "And, Irene, read me something, anything, so that I shall not go to sleep,—I want some vivacity in the picture!" And Irene, opening the book at random, and with a faltering voice, began reading the tale of the young prince whose beautiful wife leaves him at night, and whom he discovers to be a vampire at her horrid feast.

"What did you understand a vampire to be, before this reading?" I asked at its conclusion.

"A bat of some sort," said Mrs. Adriance hesitatingly.

"I never quite knew. I associate the idea with that of the ghoul who devours the dead."

"But it is revolting!"

"I see now, however, that it is one of the dead who obtains what passes for life by absorbing the life of the living."

"You make me shudder!" cried Mrs. Adriance.

"Didn't the story?"

"Too unreal, after all."

"It all resolves itself into the question of what it is to live, and what it is to be dead. To live—is to be sentient of all other life, to feel the emotions and sensations of all other beings, to be aware through every pore and at every pulse of the life of others——"

"How few live!" said Irene, looking up with her sad eyes.

"That is very pretty poetry," said Mrs. Adriance. "But poetry. And about the dead?"

"We will have no dealings with the dead," I said, "but the vampire—the ghoul—we meet her any day." And I went on with my painting.

That night, after Mrs. Adriance had gone out, radiant in her claret velvets and diamonds, Irene came softly down the stairs, her face white as the little ivory

chest she carried, the shrine no doubt, that held her love letters and her keepsakes. It was Gervais who waited for her in the alcove off the drawing-room where the lights were low. I went out for a stroll in the frosty air myself. Perhaps I did not stay long enough; for, letting myself in again in the course of the hour, I heard a broken cry, I saw a passionate embrace, and Gervais dashed headlong by me, and Irene fell fainting —to the floor if I had not caught her in season.

It was a tear-sodden face that Irene brought to the table next morning, where by her aunt she was pronounced to have a decided influenza. But at dinner she was unable to be present at all, and for several days thereafter she failed to appear.

"It is quite the best so," said Mrs. Adriance. "Once over an affair of this sort the nerve is dead and done with. And then it is for the child's lasting good. Yet it is incomprehensible—and with such taste as hers in everything else—that yellow hair of his always looked so crude—for my own part I could never endure this Gervais very near me. And he was ineffably wearisome."

I suspended my work for some weeks at this time in order that Mrs. Adriance might accompany her husband on a southern journey, and I did not return to the house during that time—being occupied, I may as well say, with the care of Gervais, who, wild with grief and rage and longing and despair, needed such care as belongs to a wayward child; his face ghastly, his health shattered, his reason unsettled, and his heart broken. "It is of no use," he cried. "There is nothing for me to do about it. She herself gave the *coup de grace.* She said it had been an idle fancy, she said she had never loved me, she said she wished for her freedom. She has cared nothing for me, she has trifled with me, she has played upon me, and she has driven me mad!"

I did the best I could in the way of comfort—it was nothing. If one had gone to the house and kidnapped Irene and brought her to him and laid her in his arms, it would have been nothing. She had herself put out

the light. And otherwise Irene would not have come. She had understood that she was sacrificing herself; and she had sacrificed both herself and Gervais.

When I next went to the Adriance mansion, Mrs. Adriance, lying back among the cushions of her purple velvet chair, superb in gold-colored gauzes and great scarlet poppies, seemed to me the most magnificent thing in flesh and blood that I had ever seen. How rich was the carmine on the olive of her cheek, how sumptuous the crimson lips, how like soft fire in midnight beams the lustre of those black-fringed eyes! The masses of her black hair glittered with their own reflections like the spikes of a silver crown above that regal brow. She laughed, a flashing laugh of white teeth, dimples, and color, and cried, "Now we are all right again! For you see we have Irene back!" How sweet in another's ears, how womanly, how lovingly self-forgetful, might that have sounded! But in mine—I looked in a bewildered wonder at Irene on the lounge, in a clinging white gown, her fair hair fallen, the deathly pallor of her face enhanced by the wide violet circles about her eyes, her form shrunken as it were to a line, the shadow of a line. She smiled faintly and sweetly, and murmured in a voice—not Irene's voice,—but one like the sound of a leaf singing in the wind, "Yes, you see I am here—what is left of me."

"And are you still reading the old story of the vampire and the maiden she devours?" I cried in my amazement.

I went, after a while, to my studio—the room which consisted of the upper floor of the house. I looked at my sketches and my canvases; I sketched a new one. I began to paint in earnest the next day, and I painted as if possessed with a sacred fury. I was up at daybreak, and I revised my work by candlelight. I ate almost nothing, saw nobody, hardly knew I lived or breathed. At the end of the week I went down to the room where Mr. and Mrs. Adriance chanced to be sitting, she with that tinge on her cheek like the scarlet on the side of a pear, and Irene, lying on the lounge

beside them, still and white as if in a trance—and I bade them to the view.

There on the canvas, with all the power of my pencil, the force of my will, the strength of my color, had I pictured the radiant creature, supple, of abounding curve, of tints rich as the autumn leaf; but through the diaphane of her drapery those long and sinuous limbs were scarcely human, and that radiance—was it the phosphorescence of the dead or the life of the living? She hung as if suspended one moment of a swift flight, and beneath was a dream of dim moonlighted graves, and in her arms, as if snatched from one of them or about to be cast into it—who could say?—was the lifeless form of a shrouded girl, blue-white and corpse-white, with the glazed gaze of the dead indeed. And her face was Irene's.

"It is the old story of the sacrifice of which we have read and spoken," I said, as they bent toward it in questioning wonder. "I never thought to see it made reality, as I have done in this house. You can hang it or not, as you please," I said, bowing myself out quickly, "but it is your portrait, Mrs. Adriance."

This strong and pathetic picture of life in an Italian poorhouse is from the pen of "Bruno Sperani," and has been translated from the Italian for ROMANCE by A. H. Cady.

TWO OLD SKEPTICS.

TEN or more great trees, thickly covered with leaves, stood in the large yard, mitigating by their shade the dry, intense heat, which rose from the pavement at the close of a long sunny day.

By twos, threes, and in groups, the old people started to come out from under the portico, which opened into the yard, in large, regular arches.

The women came from one side, in their white aprons, and with white kerchiefs crossed on their bosoms; the men from the other, in swallow-tailed coats and small caps.

Some dragged their feet wearily along, others coughed; some were bent double, others held themselves very stiff and straight in their efforts to keep their equilibrium.

Here and there was a tall, robust form, not broken by the weight of years or sorrow; fine-looking men, with noble faces and concentrated gaze, as if lost in thought, or in the contemplation of some inward, far-away image, materially alive, but with souls already gone beyond this life,—solitary, indeed, they were, in this throng of childish old people, selfish, refined or coarse, as the case might be, indifferent, infirm—in short, a motley company!

The women were more uniform in appearance, as if old age had descended more equally upon them, perhaps because their lives were secluded, less varied, less subject to great excitements. Among them there was scarcely one exceptional figure; all were small, wrinkled, shrunken, thin, and humble in their bearing.

It was the hour for their exercise after the evening

meal. They had come to take a breath of air; they walked under the trees, or sat on the benches: they had eaten and drunken, and it was, therefore, their best hour in the day. The season, too, was favorable to them.

Those who had still a little warm blood in their veins and marrow in their bones felt the spark of youth once more. Old friendships were revived, and with unconscious shyness, and great delicacy, a friendly feeling for one another, such as perhaps they had never felt in youth, was manifested.

They exchanged little gifts: snuff, tobacco, cough drops, sweets and fruit, received from some relative or friend outside.

Some of the poor women, accustomed all their lives to drink water, drew from their pockets a small bottle, into which they had put their portion of wine, and offered it to their best friends.

One of these, a little old woman, with thin face, thick white hair, and gentle eyes—one of those faces which make one think of an ill and frightened kid—slowly crossed the portico and the yard, and approached a man who sat apart from the rest, on a small bench placed against the trunk of a tree. He, too, was old, emaciated, and sickly, but tall, large-boned, and well proportioned; in his eyes, and in the lines of his mouth, there was an expression of intelligence and of tenacity. An air of conscious superiority showed itself in his bearing.

"How are you to-day, Sandro? not very well, eh?"

In the old woman's voice was a deep awe, hardly lessened by her expression of humble affection and great sweetness. He did not reply immediately. Then, without removing his pipe from his mouth, he muttered an oath.

"Always this cursed wound breaking out afresh!"

She sighed. Slowly she took a little bottle of wine out of the bag hanging on her arm.

"There's that left from dinner," she said, with a smile.

He took the bottle quickly, and drank the wine,

while the old woman looked on with evident satisfaction.

When he had finished, he handed back the bottle, and resumed smoking, responding in monosyllables to the questions which she, without being vexed by his manner, continued to ask him; nor did she resent, either, his brusque replies.

That was a way her husband had, on his bad days, after all the troubles and persecutions which had befallen him; after the death of the only son, who had been killed by an Austrian bullet; and the sorrow, poverty, and misfortunes generally which had followed them.

The old couple had been separated for a long time, but not from any volition on their part,—quite the contrary! They had no home,—nothing, in fact: she went out to service; he lived by doing little odd jobs about. What could they do to enable them to be together?

Finally, when it had pleased God, they found themselves united once more, in the "big house" of the aged poor, and lived in peace again, as they had lived forty-eight years ago, when Sandro had married her, although he was quite a gentleman—the public school-teacher at Limito—and she, only a peasant girl, not an ugly one, though!

These were the things she would tell her companions at the poor-house, laughing and sighing as she spoke, with half-ironical tenderness,—a way with some old people. And the other women listened with evident pleasure and interest, begging her to take care of herself, and live two years more, at least, so that they could celebrate the golden wedding.

"Two years!"

Two years seemed a long, long while to her; they would not be able to live all that time,—her long, thin face grew paler as she thought of it.

Alessandro Fantini, ex-school-teacher, ex-Garibaldian; ex-employé in some public office, had always been a man of strong character, a good patriot, and a

free thinker,—a little too outspoken for the times in which he lived. These were the causes of the persecution, to which his wife alluded. Italy liberated, the Austrians gone, he believed himself in the right place. In the reign of liberty and justice, brave men and free-thinkers ought, according to his lights, to find themselves eventually well placed.

Unfortunately his hopes proved vain delusions; his rough manner, together with his freedom of speech in delivering his somewhat radical ideas, worked against him.

From this time dated the incurable bitterness of his character; from this period on, he felt the irresistible need of defending his pessimistic and rebellious ideas, at any cost. It became a sort of mania, which brought him fresh troubles continually.

In the Trivulzio asylum, Sandro Fantini had, besides his wife, an intimate friend, who was also a free-thinker, and by whom he was loved and revered as a prophet. Notwithstanding that his friend was a poor old Punch-and-Judy showman, called "Gerolamo" because he had always done the talking for the puppet of this name, the Garibaldian was very much attached to him. They were always together, and exercised a certain authority over their little group of friends and admirers.

Gerolamo was much the gayer and much the more amiable of the two; he did not disdain, either, to interrupt a philosophical dispute, and entertain the company.

In these mild evenings, the old people would often seat themselves in a semicircle, the women in the centre, the men at the side, and then there would be a call for Gerolamo to come and amuse them a little. If Gerolamo delayed at all, they clapped their hands and stamped their feet, just as a real audience would do. Then the good Piedmontese, who was still a robust man, with broad shoulders and a big red face, would allow himself to be conducted under the tallest and most central tree—his stage—and begin his recital.

Although growing old, Gerolamo had become sentimental—strange metamorphosis; and instead of the farces in which his puppet had had the great successes at fairs and at children's performances, he insisted upon reciting the heart-rending lines of *Francesca da Rimini*, and other tragedies of the romantic period.

Perhaps he, too, had passed his life in work that did not suit him, applauded in an art which he really despised; condemned, by circumstances, to make "Punch and Judy" talk, thus amusing the children and the populace, while he felt himself capable of reciting like a *modena*, moving to tears the most intelligent of listeners. Now, he was avenging himself as best he could.

Unfortunately his audience was composed of half or wholly deaf people, who cared little for fine lyrics, and, contenting themselves with simply following the mimicry of the declaimer, laughed and were as much amused as if he had been saying funny things.

At the close of each act, Gerolamo cried out to the imaginary scene-shifter, "Curtain!" and at this signal, the women, always susceptible, always young enough to be amused, applauded to the echo.

At the end, however, they all cried out together with the men:

"The farce, Gerolamo! We want the farce!"

"Too bad that they are deaf, and don't understand poetry," the old Punch-and-Judy man would say to his friend, in moments of great confidence. "For they appreciate so much better than many the talent of the artist."

"They want to laugh," his friend would reply, accenting his remark with subtle irony.

When the recitation was finished, the majority of the old people who were well enough told their beads, or repeated the prayers for departed souls, if there were any dead lying in the mortuary; while the two friends walked up and down together, or seated themselves, side by side, discussing the past, with all its bitterness, which never could be forgotten.

The caustic Alessandro did most of the talking, going

over and over again the injustice, the cowardice of which he had been a victim, returning always to the saddest events in his sad life. He could not tell himself how he had managed to live during the last years before he came to the asylum. After the death of his son, who fell in one of the last battles of '49, he had tried to go into Piedmont; but had not succeeded. He had passed twenty years, he did not know how; he was only certain of one thing, they had been years of agony and torment, hunger and illness. Three times he had been in a hospital, once at the point of death—and if he had not gone through the formula of confession, they would not have given him anything to eat. So he had said to the priest: "Yes, I'll make my confession; but it's only for this reason; for I don't believe anything."

"Four times in prison, without even knowing why I was put there!"

At last the great day came, the day of the redemption, and he went forth once more with the volunteers, his joy so great that he almost became a spiritualist—yes, indeed, for it seemed to him that it was impossible, or at least it hurt to think even, that his poor boy, his darling son, who at the age of eighteen had given his life for his country, could not enjoy this triumph, this supreme happiness!

Later, he called himself a fool, a madman. He discovered that the priests still ruled everything, that those who had been friendly to the Austrians were caressed, treated with consideration, while poor devils like himself, who had given their blood for liberty, were forgotten, even despised, as he was!

When Alessandro Fantini allowed himself to get to this point in his reminiscences, he always finished by taking from the inside of his coat, where it lay over his heart, a bit of a jacket pierced by an Austrian bullet. He kissed it, and his eyes filled with tears. The old mother wept, and the other women present asked permission to kiss the relic, too—the relic of the free-thinker.

But Sandro seldom gave way to the tenderer emotions; his character inclined him rather to rebel against any manifestation of weakness. Usually he hurled imprecations against hypocrites and cowards, and propounded his ideas with the ardor and energy of a young apostle.

Not even at this last halting-place, as he called the merciful asylum, would his spirit acknowledge itself conquered. Some of his jocose companions called him the Antichrist, but they liked him.

One who certainly did not like him was the priest—in those days, there was still a spiritual head of the poorhouse—and this one, so the story goes, was much addicted to prying into other people's affairs; above all, he was given to tyranny. The old people, one and all, disliked him, and often used to get together to discuss the shortcomings of Don Sinazza; on these occasions, however, they lowered their voices, and the deaf, of course, were excluded from the conversation.

Alessandro alone dared to speak in a loud tone and to proclaim his opinions—he would have been ashamed to do as the others did.

When he stood in the centre of a group, with his inspired face, his head encircled by a halo of white hair, his black eyes still bright and shining, and his voice sonorous and penetrating, he appeared in truth an apostle of a new age.

The crowd of deaf, childish, jolly or indifferent old people gazed at him with pleasure. They listened to him with unconscious admiration, the majority of them, without understanding or taking heed of what he was saying. Scandalized, and their hearts beating quickly with a sweet and mysterious fear, which is as dear to the most humble woman as a lover's caress, these poor old souls devoured him with their eyes, and really loved him. If, however, the cassock of Don Sinazza was seen moving in the distance, the revolutionary orator immediately lost his entire audience. Those who could not get away quickly, pretended to be asleep.

In the autumn, Alessandro fell ill, and his wife took her place at one side of the bed—Gerolamo, on the other.

Farewell to the gay recitations under the green trees! Farewell to the nice chats out in the sunshine!

Many of the oldest inmates were carried off with the first cold of October. New guests arrived, more unfortunates, seeking here a last refuge.

Gerolamo never left the bedside of his sick friend, and the infirmary was full of the ill and dying. Coughing, wheezing, groaning, one by one they dropped off.

The priests stood at one bedside, and then another. From morning till night there was the sound of continuous mumbling of Latin prayers.

"You know that I don't want a priest," Alessandro said one day to his friend.

"Don't be afraid; I am here."

The old woman who sat on the other side of the bed guessed rather than heard what he was saying, and could not resist uttering a protest.

"Sandro! Sandro! for pity's sake."

The dying man, with almost superhuman will-power, raised his head, and fixed his feverishly bright eyes on those of his wife.

"I am a man! a soldier! free!" and fell back exhausted.

Her poor face, grown longer, thinner, and more like that of a goat than ever, was bathed in tears. The unhappy old woman covered it with her trembling, bony hands, and stole out of the room for a moment, that she might weep freely. When she returned, her husband looked at her with a sweet smile.

"I commend to you our relic! When you see that I am going, take it yourself. And when your time comes, and you feel that you can no longer keep on your feet, before you take to your bed, burn it, or make Gerolamo do it. If, however, he should not be here, do not entrust it to others. They might wish to preserve it, and I do not wish it to be profaned."

Weeping, she gave him the promise. A little later, the priest appeared.

"I do not wish to see you," said the sick man in a firm voice.

The priest made a gesture of astonishment and anger.

"Wandering? Delirious?" he asked, turning to the old showman.

"No, he's not out of his mind," replied the friend. "He does not want a priest, and we are here to see that his wish is respected."

The priest looked at the woman. "And what have you to say to this?"

"It is the truth," answered the poor creature, thus performing the most courageous act of her life.

So, thinking of the son so young and handsome, whose death had preceded his by many years, the free-thinker passed peacefully away.

His wife and the friend prepared the body for its last resting-place, and accompanied it to the mortuary, a large room under the portico, with a big slab or table leaning against the wall. Over this table hung a great crucifix of wood, with the beard of the Christ in wool, an ugly work of the sixth century.

Five old people had died during the day, and lay nude upon the slab, barely covered with some worn quilts. The apostle of atheism had been put in the best place.

"Oh, my God! My poor, poor Sandro!" exclaimed the old woman, sobbing and overcome by superstitious terror.

The grave-diggers prepared the six narrow coffins made of roughest wood.

On the following Sunday, in the gray, cold air of the late November days, the old people, numb, and half-stunned by the succession of deaths, the continuous funerals of the past week, sat in their accustomed places in the chapel, listening to the sermon which followed the service. Suddenly, Don Sinazza began, in a thundering voice, to denounce the irreligious, the unbelievers, and especially the Garibaldian, who never had cared to listen to his preaching.

At first, no one comprehended. Those who were deaf, and who, therefore, understood nothing, looked around them, frightened, appalled, interrogating the faces of their neighbors. The poor souls, who were already in their dotage, smiled in a beatified manner, and were as much edified by the priest's screaming and wild gesticulations as they had been formerly by Gerolamo's rendering of *Francesca da Rimini*, or when the apostle of atheism hurled imprecations against injustice and hypocrisy.

Little by little, and without knowing why, all were overcome by a vague terror, a tormenting disquietude. The disconsolate widow wept, and her worn-out frame shook, as the dry leaves do in the autunm wind. Near the door, and looking out into the empty space beyond, sat the old showman, clinching his teeth, to control the anger which was inwardly devouring him.

"There are few French immigrants in America," said a young foreigner not long ago. "France is too beautiful to leave, and its people adore it." Here is the love-story, told with exquisite grace by Henri de Chennevières, of a man and a woman who gladly gave their all for France and the King. It is translated for ROMANCE by Mrs. Carlton A. Kingsbury.

A HERO OF THE VENDÉE.

I.

THE *Bleus*, fierce and brawling, had unexpectedly arrived. Through the streets of Mans resounded the beating of drums. The Vendeans, scarcely recovered from their fatigue, discouraged, rallied to the attack. At the third assault they retreated to the heart of the city, and, panic-stricken, scattered far and wide.

At sundown, the *Bleus* forded the river. They reached the city. Then began a frightful, hand-to-hand struggle. At last, it became nothing less than butchery in the narrow streets. The *Blancs* fled.

Over the road to Laval surged a crowd constantly increasing in numbers and in disorder. Hidden behind a clump of fir-trees, at a distance from the road, a small cottage caught the eye of one of these fugitives. There he knew that he could find a shelter because he had fought with the Vendeans.

Twilight was falling. All was silent within the house. Near the aged grandmother three women sat listening to the far-off cannonading. The son was in Mans; he was fighting, with the white cockade in his hat.

The door was suddenly pushed open; upon the threshold stood a young man, unknown, pale as the dead, his clothes stained with blood, the image of the Sacré-Cœur on his breast. He held in his arms a young woman who was unconscious; he hurried toward the group.

"Here, mistress, is my wife; take care of her till after the battle."

He kissed the white cheek of the unconscious girl and hastened away.

Marie-Jeanne carried the unknown to her own bed; her sister, Josèphe, lighted a candle and placed it on a small stand at the head of the bed. They bathed the young girl's temples with cold water, they rubbed her hands, they unfastened her gown, a tattered gray satin, black with smoke.

In the mean time, the little Annette was devouring the stranger with her eyes. How small she was, how slender, how delicate! One would have thought her a child, truly, if her hands had not been loaded with precious stones. What lace was on her clothing! What a delicate fragrance pervaded all her garments! How beautiful she was! What long black eyelashes, what a nose, how like the Virgin's! But she did not revive. Mon Dieu! what if she was dead!

A faint color began to tinge her cheeks. Marie-Jeanne and Josèphe redoubled their efforts. At last, the young woman opened her eyes, threw a frightened look around, and closed them again. Marie-Jeanne bent over her, and said:

"Madame, fear nothing, the *Bleus* are far away."

The stranger opened her eyes, and, reassured, gazed about the room.

"Your husband, madame, you shall see soon. He brought you here unconscious, and left you in our care."

Repressing an exclamation of agony, the young woman held out her hand to Marie-Jeanne. The peasant said to her:

"It is supper-time, madame. Will you not give us the pleasure of sitting down with us?"

The stranger rose, arranged her dress, smoothed her hair, and with a tottering step went to a chair near the fireplace, facing the old grandmother. Annette took the pot from the fire, and poured the soup into earthen bowls. Then, Marie-Jeanne stood up and said the

Benedicite. They ate in silence. Suddenly Marie-Jeanne rose.

"Not yet returned?" the stranger asked.

Josèphe replied: "If I were in thy place, I should not expect our Pierre until to-morrow. Let us go to bed. Madame, you will excuse us?"

"Oh! do not trouble yourself about me. My husband will return this evening, without doubt."

The girl's voice trembled and her eyes filled with tears. The grandmother and the younger women retired.

When she was left alone, the young stranger threw herself at the foot of a cross of black wood; her prayer, at first ardent, became, ere long, a sorrowful revery. She thought of her childhood, of Versailles, of the ball where the Dauphin himself had danced with her. Then came her marriage with Robert de Sesture. Four days afterward, they escaped from their burning château, wandered from hiding-place to hiding-place, from battle-field to battle-field, following the fortunes of war. Death, Yolande de Sesture had faced daily; suffering, both mental and physical, she had uncomplainingly endured—and she was scarcely sixteen years of age.

The old clock told off the hours with a monotonous tick-tack. Yolande wished to go away—but where? No one waited for her. She had no place to lay her head.

Suddenly, a step was heard. She flew to open the door. Upon the door-stone was a stranger.

Yolande fell back. The women came out. Marie-Jeanne cried: "Pierre!" and threw her arms around her son. The young man disengaged himself from her embrace, and walked toward the stranger:

"Madame, you are the Marquise de Sesture, are you not?"

Yolande cried: "How do you know that?"

"I have fought all the evening next to the Marquis de Sesture."

The young woman looked at Pierre with anguished eyes.

"Where did you leave him?"

"In the Faubourg de Sainte-Croix."

"Why is he not here?"

Pierre hesitated.

"I was asked to give you this ring."

Yolande made a motion as if to seize it, but dropped unconscious upon the floor.

Alas! she comprehended but too well! Afar on the plain covered with the corpses of the slain, Robert de Sesture slept among the dead.

II.

Eight days passed. The hordes of the *Bleus* had left the city.

In a corner of the Carel garden, Pierre had dug a grave, and in the darkness of night had brought the body of the Marquis de Sesture and buried it. Every evening the family went to the grave to read the office for the dead.

Yolande still remained at the cottage. Pierre had not rejoined the *Blancs* on the banks of the Loire. He passed his days polishing his firearms; near by was the melancholy Marquise. Her small feet on a low stool, her slender hands clasped on her knees, with vacant eyes she sat immovable for hours; sometimes she recited a prayer.

One day, Pierre spoke of France, of the King. Yolande raised her head, her eyes flashed, the blood mounted to her cheeks. Attentive, interested, she listened to the Vendean, and immediately replied to him; not in languid tones, but with a voice vibrating with youth and passion. A bond was formed between these two souls filled with the same heroism. Pierre was no longer a peasant; the daily dangers of war, his nobleness of mind, his religious enthusiasm, made a hero of him. Yolande was no longer a Marquise, she was a Vendéenne. Nothing had changed about her, but from this hour she wished to live. Hope returned to her desponding heart.

The next day, Pierre, armed to the teeth, left the

cottage before daybreak. He had been ordered to make a very dangerous reconnoissance; it, perhaps, meant death, and he was going without warning the family. He groped his way to the door. Once outside, he hesitated and looked up at the window of the attic in which the Marquise slept. Suddenly his heart began to beat violently. He had heard a noise as of the opening of a shutter. It was the Marquise, and she spoke to the young man in soft tones:

"Pierre, it is you, is it not? I understood yesterday what you were going to do, and I have prayed all night. God be with you!"

She closed the window. Pierre, intoxicated with joy, hurried away.

Fifteen days passed. Two or three times Pierre went out to reconnoitre, and always before his eyes was the Marquise's face.

One day, returning from an expedition, Pierre said to the young Marquise:

"Madame, the *Bleus* are in the city, you are no longer safe here. An English vessel is anchored at Saint-Gilles; you must go there. You must go to England, from there to Germany, and then to your brother's house."

Yolande's smile was sad. Was not this brother the only bond connecting her with her broken life? Pierre, seeing her so sad, suddenly experienced a strange but sweet sensation—but all the more on account of his wild dream, ought he to see her outside of France and re-united with her brother.

"We must leave to-night," he continued. "It is a dangerous journey, but with the help of Monseigneur Saint-Julien I will try to get you past the lines of the *Bleus*."

During supper Pierre seemed in a dream. The Marquise went to her attic directly after the meal was ended. She looked about the poor room and, turning to Marie-Jeanne, who had brought up a lighted candle, she said:

"How good you have been to me. These twenty days have been the saddest of my life, yet you have

robbed them of half their bitterness. I shall never forget it."

And the Marquise threw her arms around the peasant.

At midnight, a small door at the rear of the Carel cottage slowly opened. Pierre glided out, then Yolande in one of Annette's costumes. They crossed the little garden and soon reached the path. They hastened on with rapid steps, and, in order not to lag behind, Yolande put her arm within Pierre's.

The horizon lightened—the fugitives reached the main road. Soon the day broke deadly cold. Wearied with their rapid progress, Yolande leaned yet more heavily on Pierre's arm. About seven o'clock they arrived at a little farm, well known to Pierre as a refuge for Vendeans. Here they were received cordially and promised two horses to continue their journey. They waited until night to proceed, then hastened on as fast as the two horses could travel. For the first time in his life, Pierre felt afraid, not for himself, but for his companion. At sunrise they stopped, hid their horses in a small clump of trees, and waited again until nightfall to resume their journey. At the end of six days they reached Saint-Gilles, and knocked at the door of a fisherman's hut where Pierre knew that shelter was to be found. They were kindly received, but the fisherman informed Pierre that their arrival was very inopportune, for the *Bleus* were in camp just outside the town. They were always spying about, and as the sea was very rough, it would be impossible for them to embark before the following night.

But Yolande was too wearied to think of the future, even the future of to-morrow. She retired to a small room and threw herself on the bed, but she could not sleep. A vague uneasiness kept her awake. She thought of the future, of the tempest, of the dangers of the ocean, of her exile, of the unknown dangers. On the other hand was the little cottage at Mans, the warm affection shown her, where she had almost forgotten her unhappiness, and she felt that she must see it again. The young man also was unhappy. Yolande about to

depart forever! The thought wrung Pierre's heart. All day he pondered over the future, his brain in a whirl, his heart throbbing painfully.

At sunset Yolande came from her chamber, and seated herself near the fire.

Suddenly, the housewife, having been out for water, rushed into the house:

"The *Bleus!* the *Bleus!* they are coming with fixed bayonets!"

The fisherman turned white and said to the two travellers:

"Quick! hide in the loft over the fireplace."

Seizing the frail Yolande in his strong arms, Pierre climbed into the hiding-place. In the narrow space into which they were crowded they could scarcely move or breathe.

The weapons of the soldiers were heard clashing below. They had entered the hut. The search began: the furniture was thrown about; the walls shook; cries, sobs, prayers filled the air in confused medley.

"Oh! they are killing them!" groaned Yolande.

"What of it, if you are saved?"

Heavy blows resounded against the loft; they were trying to break in the walls. Instinct made the Marquise throw herself into Pierre's arms for protection; the young man lost his head.

"Yolande," he murmured, "Yolande, I love thee! Let me tell thee once before we die."

She gave him a long look, full of agony and terror; then suddenly she became unconscious.

The heavy walls resisted the attack; the blows grew less and finally ceased; for the moment the *Bleus* had abandoned that corner.

Pierre gazed at the unconscious Marquise, bitter thoughts filling his heart. He knew that a deep abyss separated him from this woman.

Finally, the noise ceased in the hut; the soldiers had evidently departed. Soon the housewife came to open the concealed door for them. Pierre laid the Marquise in the good woman's arms, and turned to the fisherman.

"The tempest is of no account. We must embark this evening. Lend me your boat."

Yolande opened her terrified eyes, but she could not speak. Pierre shunned her look.

"Come, be quick! not a moment must be lost."

The man tried to make excuses, but Pierre silenced him with a movement of the hand to his pistols.

Three hours later the little boat, having weathered the gale, reached the ship. Yolande was received on board.

III.

Under the statue of Peter the Great a young man stood motionless. His type was French, his costume Breton. It was Pierre Carel, pale, haggard, emaciated. He had fought till the last hour, courting death, but death had spared him. Exiled four months before to St. Petersburg, without a home, almost without bread, he wandered aimlessly about. One face was ever before him, one name ever in his thoughts; but to him, the glory and honors he had won in the Vendean war did not lessen the distance between his race and Yolande's. If the Marquis could have foreseen that fatal love, would he have said to him:

"My friend, at thy mother's house I left my Yolande. Take this ring to her; care for her; guard her to the end of the war. I confide her to thee."

In the midst of his revery he started; he had suddenly perceived a figure upon a bench—was it Yolande's ghost? Trembling, he approached the young woman. She turned toward him. Two startled cries, and then silence. Pierre did not move; he could not speak. Yolande lowered her eyes.

The Marquise broke the stillness.

"We meet once more, monsieur, in sad times. I know of the glory you won in the Vendean war. Tell me all about it."

But Pierre did not wish to speak of it. He questioned her as to her affairs.

"Ah! I have suffered. The voyage was a long

agony. I found myself a heavy burden to my brother. Very soon he married an old rich woman—and I was left alone. Adieu, I must return."

Pierre seized her shawl:

"Madame, may I not see you again? Permit me to become your faithful servant. You are poor; let me work for you. You are sad; I will speak to you of France, of the King, of your happy days. And if you will reward me, sometimes, with a smile, I shall return to my attic happy."

Yolande hesitated some seconds, then she held out her hand to the young man.

"Come at half-after-nine to the house of the Duchess de Vaucley. I pass all my evenings there. She will be happy to meet a hero of the Vendée."

At the appointed hour, Pierre presented himself at the Duchess de Vaucley's house. Five or six persons sat about the room. The eldest, an old woman, with snow-white hair, turned toward Pierre.

"My dear little Marquise, this is, I believe, thy protégé?"

Yolande replied:

"Duchess, my protégé is well known to you; he is Pierre Carel, the hero of the Vendée."

A murmur of surprise was heard from the group. All stared at this modest, almost awkward young man. The Duchess said to him:

"Monsieur, receive the assurance of our sincere admiration. We are very happy to know the great Carel."

Pierre, abashed, did not reply. This incense was pleasing to him, but not from vanity; it was because of a feeling that the distance between himself and Yolande was lessened a little.

Hesitatingly, he seated himself near the young Marquise, and his eyes never left her face.

At ten o'clock they rose to leave. The Duchess called Pierre one side:

"Monsieur Carel, I confide to you our little Marquise. She could not be in better hands. My poor old servant is lame and scarcely able to be sent out this evening."

Pierre accepted the charge with a beating heart, and Yolande reddened. She placed her hand, a little timidly, on Pierre's arm. The Marquise did not speak. Pierre was experiencing the happiness of protecting the woman whom he adored.

Yolande lived in a miserable cottage, where she slept in the attic.

The young Marquise had tenderly loved her husband, but it was almost as a father. Married when almost a child, she had never experienced a first love. Widowed at sixteen she had deeply felt, for a time, her loss; but now for the first time knew what it was to love.

The next evening she went early to the Duchess de Vauclay's. Madame was eating her meager dinner. A long conversation followed about Pierre Carel. At last the Duchess said to Yolande:

"My dear little one, dost thou want my advice? Marry Pierre Carel."

Yolande made an exclamation of surprise, almost of fright.

"I repeat it, marry Pierre Carel. He adores thee, and —pardon my frankness—thou lovest him. He is the descendant of laborers, but he has earned the title of nobility. And now, he is coming early. He came to see me this morning. Dost thou authorize me to speak?"

"Ah! Madame, thou hast been my best friend. Thou hast been my benefactress. I leave my future in thy hands."

Pierre arrived early. The Duchess, fearing the entrance of other guests, came brusquely to the point. Pierre replied to her pointed speech:

"Madame, do I understand?—may I believe—Ah! if it is so! I am unworthy, a thousand times unworthy, of this happiness—but I accept it. My only hope is to make my life one long service to Madame de Sesture."

At this moment other guests began to appear, and the conversation was discontinued. Yolande and Pierre did not look at each other. The young man left early. After a sleepless night he made a resolution. He wrote a note to the Duchess de Vaucley, explaining his sud-

den departure by a call from His Majesty, Louis XVIII. Then, that same morning, without resources, almost without knowing the road, he departed, on foot, for Mittau. Often had he thought of going to the King. His extreme humility had deterred him, but the knowledge of Yolande's love had given him courage.

Fifteen days later he arrived at Mittau, with torn boots and ragged clothes, almost a beggar. His name, well known to the pages, gave him an immediate audience with His Majesty.

The King received him with effusion.

"At last! I have waited for you a long time, my dear Carel, to become acquainted with you, to congratulate you, to thank you."

The conversation, at first, was about the future of France. Then, it changed to more personal subjects. The King suddenly took Carel's hand.

"I have a plan for you. I wish to marry you—to a charming young woman of our nobility. Her husband charged me, in case of his death, to marry her to a hero worthy of her. I could not choose better. She is the Marquise de Sesture."

Pierre became as pale as the dead. It required all the force of his strong will not to faint like a young girl.

The King was astonished.

"Oh! well! Carel, this proposition does not please you?"

With trembling voice Pierre let fall these words:

"Sire, I have loved her for seven years." And he related the entire story.

One of the chamberlains of Louis XVIII. departed in haste to St. Petersburg, with orders to bring Yolande back with him, because His Majesty wished, himself, to place her hand in Pierre's.

The marriage was celebrated at Mittau. The evening before the modest ceremony, for everything was modest in this court of exile, Yolande drew from her finger the Marquis' ring, and held it toward Pierre.

"Here, return it to me to-morrow. Shall I not still be the wife of a Vendean and of a hero?"

A wild and passionate story, but admirably told and full of the fascinating spirit of the South, is "The Barred Gate," by Eva Wilder McGlasson. Those who enjoy the negro dialect will find it reproduced here with remarkable fidelity.

THE BARRED GATE.

THE house faced the river; it was built in the style of half a century ago, with overhanging roof and with porches extending entirely around both floors.

The rough yellowish stucco of the outer walls was stained and cracked in places, and if there was ever paint on the dull, dark shutters, or on the posts and railings of the galleries, Time had touched it with an effacing finger.

I saw this much looking straight up, for the house stood on a steep hill rising abruptly from the Kentucky side of the Ohio River.

The grass on the ascent was green for March, but here and there were rifts in the verdure showing an uneven, sallow sod beneath.

Separating the old place from the river road was a low stone wall, whose wide iron gate, with a massive stone column at either side, was directly opposite the front door of the dwelling; this gate was made to spring open from the middle, but as I paused here with the intention of entering, I saw, wound many times around the latch, a chain of iron, heavy and rusted.

"No thoroughfare, evidently," I thought, and looking beyond the barred gate, my opinion was verified; there was no remote sign of any path leading upward to the house—nothing but an undulating steep of grass, diversified by a few forlorn brown shrubs.

My position was embarrassing; I was a young physician newly located in the little town a mile away, and had been summoned to attend some one in this grim structure frowning down upon me.

To assail the inviolable sanctity of the gate might

affront those who had so inhospitably secured it, so I determined to look for another approach.

Walking on, I reached a break in the wall, and saw a thread of a path winding upward, less toward the house than to a small whitewashed cabin in a dimple of the hillside.

As I went up this path and neared the cabin door, an aged negress appeared on the threshold.

Her white eyebrows gave a witch-like look to her withered black face, and a solitary tooth visible when she spoke enhanced this effect; her eyes twinkled with almost youthful fire, and a scarlet turban, coquettishly knotted about her head, gave token that still in these ashes lived an unquenchable spark of vanity.

"Wartch yo' wan'?" she asked, somewhat suspiciously. I explained my business.

"This is the house, is it not?—the old Cabell place?" I asked in conclusion.

"Yaas—dis heah's de place, sho' nuff. Lord Gord, chile! wha' yo' come f'om to ax seck-laike question's dat arr? I t'ought de hull state o' Kaintucky knowed wha' our fambly libbed—de Cabell fambly."

I said my ignorance arose from the fact that I had only lived in Kentucky for two weeks, and asked to be directed to the house.

"Yo' come erlong in heah an' tek a cheer," replied the old woman, grimly; "cuz yo' ain' gwin' up to de hoose—no buddy ain' been up tha' fo' yeahs 'cep' me; ole Miss' hes rheumatics, 'n' yo' kin set ri' down heah 'n' write off a 'scription to kunjur it out'n heh laig. Yo' don' hev to see rheumatics to know how to kunjur 'em."

In vain I explained the necessity of seeing the sufferer before I could give medical advice; my hostess was adamant.

When she declared she was only obeying orders, I surrendered, and wrote directions for a liniment, which I knew could do no harm and might do much good.

The old woman took the slip of paper with great wariness and placed it on the table under a corncob

pipe; then she sat down in a great wooden chair, and folding her arms in a position of much comfort, began to question me concerning myself with that playful curiosity for which her sex is noted, without reference to age, color, or previous condition of servitude.

"So you's f'om de fur norf, is yo'?" she commented, rocking herself to and fro. "Dat's how come yo' ain' hearn tell o' de Cabells.

"Dee's a gret fambly once, man! Hum-m? I 'member w'en dat arr hoose up yan wuz de fines' place on de ribber road, and back in de qua'ter wuz mo' niggers 'n' yo' cud shake a stick at.

"Dat's long erbout de time w'en Marse Cabell done mah'ied Miss C'leste Dupray down souf in Weesyanner; dat's heh whar's ole Miss' now, up yander wi' de misery in heh laig.

"But dem days she wuz a mighty well-favored gal, I tole yo'!

"Hed de blaackes' har I eveh lain my eyes on, cl'ar down to heh kness, an' de w'ites' skin Lord eveh wrap' roun' any po' flaish'n'-blood on top de yuth. De hull county wen' wild oveh heh, and Marse Cabell he fahly wo'shup heh; he wuz might'nigh fohty yeahs ole w'en he done got mah'ied, an' I've hearn 'im tell how he neveh sot eyes on any woman he wanted fo' a wife, twell he met Miss C'leste at a big doin's in Noo Erleans.

"Yaas, she wuz a heap younger 'n him, but dee libbed mighty happy togerr sutiny, an' w'en Marse Gar wuz bo'n, 'peared laike dee didni need nuffin' mo'.

"Ed-gar wuz he sholy name, but we-all took to call'n' 'im Marse Gar, an' de neeck-name stuck to 'im arter-wa'ds.

"I nussed 'im ri' heah at de breas' wi' my own lill' 'Liphalet, an' if I lubbed one dem chillun mo'n de urr, I cyarn' tole yo' which 'twuz.

"Marse Gar, he wuz fine-lookin' laike she maw; dee Cabells wuz big'n' tall, an' showed dar good blood, but dee hed ha'r dat would a been *red* if't growed on any urr haids.

"Marse Gar tuk arter he maw—big spa'klin' eyes 'n' cl'ar skinned 'n' high tempered jes laike heh—an' yo' heah me! she hed de temper!

"She'd pitch any t'ing at yo' she'd lay heh han's on we'n she's right mad, an' dem blaack eyes'd flash laike dar wuz fiah in 'em, an' dar'd be a lill' roun' red spot bu'nin in her cheek, an' dem times she talk a gibberish yo' couldn' onderstan'—Frainch, I blebe 'twuz; I min' two wo'ds us' to soun' sumpin laike saker dew.

"She jes' boun' up in dat boy; w'en he growed big 'nough to go to college, de way she tuk on would a tu'ned ha'r gray. She knowed he hed to go 'cuz he's risin' semteen an' Doctah Spaldin' couldn' teach 'im no mo', cuz Marse Gar knowed mo'n he did hisse'f.

"Ole mars he felt it bad's miss' done, but 'twarn' he way to rar' an' pitch; Marse Gar wuz de ve'y breaf ob 'im, but dough he wuz gettin' right ole, he neveh tu'ned a ha'r de day Marse Gar lef'.

"W'en de kerrige roll' off wi' dat boy lookin' back an' wavin' he han'chee to he maw an' paw, dee bofe stan' up right straight on de po'ch an' smile an' nod dee haids to 'im; but w'en de kerrige tu'n de cu've in de road, marse he jes' walk in de hoose quick an' go in de libra'y an' shet de do' ha'd; an' miss' she fall in a heap on de po'ch wi' heh high heels clicking on de flo' an' heh ha'r streamin' down an' a laughin' an' a screamin' an' a gurglin' twell me an' Daphne whar wuz heh maid, cut heh stay laces, an' fotch heh up to baid, an' wuk wi' heh twell she git quieted down.

"I don' rightly min' how long 'twuz 'fo' Marse Gar got shet o' college; ev'y time he kem home he'd growed a heap, an' w'en he kem home fo' good he hed de cutes' lill' mistache yo' eveh looked at—daak an' cu'lin' up at de en's, an' er'y gal in de hull county wuz runnin' arter 'im, an' 'im mighty perlite 'n' fair-spoken to 'em 'n' all dat, but he say 'Ump-m!'—he ain' gwin' pick out a wife twell he fin's a lady putty ez he maw! Gord a mighty! how dat tickled miss'! An' she did look sprightly 'nough to be Marse Gar's sister sholy, an' der wuzn' a gal in de hull state cud tech heh.

"Ole marse wuz gettin' mighty gray den, an' he us't er set out on de po'ch right smart an' talk to ev'y one 'boot whar all gret things Marse Gar wuz gwine do w'en he sta't out'n de worl'.

"Hi-yoo-ooo! King o' grace!—de don' know de yuth wuz gwin' trem'le wi' de cannon an' be rip' open wi' shot; dee didn't know't den, but dee know't soon 'nough.

"Yaas, Lord, w'en dat wah kem, it toah de kentry to pieces an' it toah famblies apart, too.

"One way de wah didn't git ve'y neah us—nurr way it got mighty clost. Yo' kin go out dar on Lexin'ton Pike any time an' see wha' de wah lef' some stone wuks behin' it; dat's all de closer it got dat a way, but——

"Yo' heah me—Marse 'n' Miss wuz soufeners from de wud go!—an' dee'd, sir, up an' talk deese'fs hoa'se 'bout de durn Yankees; Marse Gar he don' say much but he look mighty cuyus, an' one day he tells 'em he gwine fight.

"'Fo' my kentry,' he says, right plain; 'yo' onderstan' me, an' I hopes yo'll fo'gi' me: I love Kaintucky and I love de souf—but I loves my kentry mo'!'

"Hm-m-m! dem wuz days. Ole Marse 'n' Miss' dee begged an' cried an' raved 'round, an' high wo'ds passed, but dee couldn't move 'im hide er ha'r.

"'Yo' no son o' mine 'f yo' dar raise han' gins' de onsulted souf!' roahs ole Marse.

"'My bitteres' curse follow yo', ongrateful boy whom I have loved mo'n I have my Gord!' says Miss, w'ite ez de daid 'cep' fo' dem blazin' eyes.

"An' Marse Gar he tuk it all wi' he lips set close 'n' he haid up; he neveh gin 'em a wo'd back, an' he walk down 'n' out de big gate yon, an' Miss' she stan' in do'-way wi' one han' raised an' her lips movin' dough yo' cyarn' heah no soun'.

"I run out in de road arter 'im, a bawlin' laike a calf, 'cuz I lubbed 'im an' mebby I won' get to see 'im no mo', an' he put he haid down on my shoulder wha' it us't' lay w'en he's lill' baby an' de tears stream f'om

he eyes an' he say 'He'm bless yo' Mammy,' an' he gone.

"Miss' she ain' hev no 'sterics dis time—she hes brain feveh, an' w'en she gets out'n dat arr bed, heh ha'r's done tu'n w'ite ez heh skin.

"Ole Marse he fail ev'y day, an' all dat winteh du bofe sot oveh de fiah in de settin' room an' never see a libbin' soul whar kem to de hoose.

"To'des spreng ole Marse git so feeble hit pass froo my min' he's fixin' to die fo' sho'; he hedn' speak o' Marse Gar all winteh, but he got so now he don't talk 'boot nuffin e'se.

"'Peahed laike he wuz gettin' kin' o' teched, az he talk laike he t'ink Miss' hed run Marse Gar off de place.

"'Wha's my boy!' he keep axin'; 'C'leste, wha's my boy wi' yo' own putty eyes. I want 'im, C'leste. I ain' got long to live an' I want my boy—de son o' my ole age.'

"Firs' off, she wouldn' heah to 'im; she jes' say 'Meeser-ruble man! yo' have no son.' Den one day ole Marse broke laike.

"'Woman!' he say, jes' dat deep down voice, 'heartless mother! yo' have sacrifice' yo' chil' to yo' infunnel prejudice—are yo' satisfied? are yo' satisfied?'

"'No, no!' I hearn her say; 'Oh Gar! Gar! what is Norf or Souf compared to my longin' for one look at yo' face!'

"Never min' now, ev'ything gwine come right, thinks I, an' sho' nough, dee wuz lette's writ, an' fo' long a big one kivered wi' maa'ks kim from Mars Gar, an' Miss' she pur' nigh eat it up fo' she read it.

"It tole how he hea't wuz glad to know dee done forgib 'im, an' how he's cap'n now an' gwine be gin'rul yit, an' he's got fu'lough to come home to see we-all an' he be tha' laike it wuz dis Fursday week, and he sen's he bes' lub to mammy—yo' heah dat?—to me?

"Soon's ole Marse hearn Marse Gar's comin', he picked right up an' o'dered big doin's to welcome 'im on de night he git dar.

"Miss' she lowed she rufer hev 'im all to dar se'fs,

an' Kaintucky ain' no place to welcome a Union sojer an' any how dee ain' no gentmen to vite, uz so many done gone to de wah.

"Ole Marse he say he mean's ev'y one to know he forgibs he son, an's fur's Kaintucky's 'sairned, she's settin' on de top fence rail wi' her skirts hilt up, an's long she ain' git down one side er de urr an' fight, she ain' got no right to holler 'go it!' to eiver pa'ty.

"So dee wuz brilin's an' bakin's an' reg'lar hello-boys all over de place! Su' de highes' tone' famblies 'roun' got an invite, an' de black folks wen' flutt'rin' 'roun' laike hens on hot griddles.

"Hi-yo! I ain' forgit dat night twell I twang my ha'p in glory! Marse Gar wuz comin' on de se'in erclock train, whar stop at de cross roads a mile behin' our hoose, an' he warn't goin' know nuffin' 'boot de infa'r twell he got cl'ar to de gate.

"Yea'ly's six de folks 'gin to 'rive an' de fine ladies—yo' don' see none laike em sence de wah; dem wuz ladies den, whar couldn' tu'n dee han' to do a lick—well, dee kem steppin' out dee kerriges, an' Daphne 'sco'ted 'em up styars to lay off dee wrups.

"Sholy de place look laike de Hem'ly Kingdom dat time, wi' de to'ches 'n' lante'ns 'n' flowe's an' lights shinin' in ev'ry window an' de rastle o' silk gounds.

"Miss' she tuk de staa'ce out'n ev'y las' one ob 'em fer a fac'! She stan' up gran' an' tall, wi' heh w'ite ha's pile' on top her haid, an' heh skin laike de cotton w'en it buss open, an' heh blaack eyes flashin' mo'n de di'mon's in heh yeah's!

"She woah a w'ite satin gound wi' big bunches o' roses weaved in all oveh de groun', an' made wi' a gret pleat at de back ob de naick an' fall'n' way down loose in a long train. An' Daphe sayed Miss C'leste done ax heh twen'y times dat day ef w'ite ha'r mek heh look ole, an' ef Marse Gar tink she ain' so putty laike she us't' be. An' I pusson'y knowed dat Pop-eyed Joe, what wuz my husban' an' a triflin' yeller scamp, wuz sont way off to town to git a lill' pot o' red paint, so I spicionated how come Miss's cheeks dat lubby pink,

'dough Daphne sayed dat's de furses' time paint eveh tech Miss C'leste's face, an' she 'longed to heh w'en she's Mamselle Dupray down in Weesyanner.

"Dee wuz all a waitin', cuz 'twuz oveh train-time an' Pop-eyed Joe'd been gone wi' de kerridge a right smaat spell. I wuz stanin' down at the big gate whar hed a light on each pos' an' evehgreen wreafs oveh it, an' I hed on a new silk han'cher an' gole rings in my yeahs, an' I look down de road an' putty soon I see sumpin' tu'n de cu've.

"'Heah dee come!' I hollered, an' fiddler Ike struck up a ma'ch, an' ev'y one kin troopin' out de hoose.

"Yaas—Marse Gar neveh broke he wo'd; he kim home dat night sho' 'nough.

"Dee wuz six sojers wi' 'im in blue suits wi' capes to 'em; th'ee sojers on one side an' th'ee on on t'urr, steppin' 'long slow wi' dar haids down, an' Marse Gar layin' quiet 'twix 'em, laike he us't lay in mammy's lap w'en he wuz a lill chile.

"O'ny he wouldn' neveh wake up no mo'.

"Dee cyat' 'em in froo de big gate an' up de steep parf, an' dee tole how he got shot in a skeermish jes ez he's 'bout ready to start home.

"Miss' she neveh shaid a teah f'om dat twell dis; she jes say rale quiet, 'Tie up de big gate; let no foot e'rr pass thoo that unholy space; I cursed my boy as he went out thar, an' A'mighty God has punish' me.'

"Dats fur why de gate's chained. No one eveh kem in thar sence. W'en de riveh rises, de yeller wateh comes crepin' onder it, but nuffin e'se comes, 'less a w'ite ghos' stan's tha' sometimes.

"Ole Miss', she porful ole now, she libs alone up yan, an' she sets all day an' many a night by dat middle winder an' star's at de gate laike she sees sumpin' thar we all cyarn' see."

This terrible but heroic story is from the pen of the famous Edmondo de Amicis, and has been translated from the Italian for ROMANCE by J. Murray Mitchell. Incidentally, it reads a valuable lesson to those who interpret character too readily, and who pass judgment without troubling themselves to find out all the facts in the case.

COURAGE.

"LOOK!" said my friend a few evenings ago, pointing from a window of his residence, which gives on a small square, to a balcony on the fourth story of the opposite house. "Do you see that man?"

I looked. There was a man seated in a corner, with his arm lying along the railing, but I was unable to distinguish his features.

"That man," continued my friend, "is so disagreeable to me that I have more than once thought of changing my home, if for no other reason than that I might not see him any more. You will naturally ask me why. I have never spoken to him. I have never heard his voice. I do not know who he is nor what he does. I do not know what he looks like, as my sight does not reach so far, not even through a telescope. That man is repulsive to me because every evening at this time he invariably rises from his meal and seats himself in that corner, and every evening he automatically folds one leg over the other and lays one arm along the railing. It never happens that he moves first the leg, then the arm, but he first rests his arm and then crosses his legs. You will allow that he is detestable enough merely on this account, but this is only a trifle to the rest. Every evening a woman, who seems to be his wife, before he rises, arranges his chair, brings him his pipe, puts it in his hands, lights it for him—and every evening he suffers himself to be waited upon in this glorious and triumphant manner without acknowledging in the slightest manner the services rendered.

Then every moment he needs something, and the woman rises and rushes and gets whatever it may be: and he takes it, drinks it, if it happens to be something to drink, furbishing his moustache with an egotistic, sybaritic sort of satisfaction, without even taking the trouble to hand the glass back. Then friends come to see him, and he does not try to rise, and yet he can stand and walk along the balcony as well as anybody else. He does not look up, nor down, nor around him; he never bows. Altogether he seems to have been built there, so that the world might travel around him. He is an idol; he is born to be waited upon. And you laugh! These are things that make me hate a man. I cannot help it; another person would not mind it, but I feel it. I imagine I know that man as well as I know you. Who is he? I never asked, but I can tell you as though I knew it all. That man——", and so saying he pointed his finger toward the man, staring at him fixedly as though to draw from him his secret, "that man is an every-day merchant, who is beginning to get rich and holds already within him the conceit that is overcoming him as he prospers more and more; and he has married that woman in order to save the expense of a clerk in the store and of a servant in the house. He treats her worse than a servant and no better than a clerk. He is sordid except to satisfy his own gluttony; he might live on the third floor, but he lives on the fourth for economy's sake, although he has no children and has no desire for any. He despises everything that is not shop; he calls ministers thieves; asses, all those who study; and beggars, all those who have less than he has. Oh, you may laugh if you want to! Do you not know that hatred is a good guesser? Indeed, I should really feel happy if I had a chance to be rude to him. I detest him. I may be visionary, malignant, whatever you choose to call me; but when my heart tells me that that man is a hard case, I can but express my opinion frankly."

You ought to know this young man of twenty, good-hearted, restless and passionate, and become accustomed

to his queer tirades against the phantasms that his own imagination creates. Then you could readily understand that he gave vent to this long oration all in one breath and without even smiling.

I was in the mean time looking at the supposed merchant and at the woman seated on the stool in front of him, with her arms crossed on her knees in an attitude of dreamy contemplation. I have better sight than my friend, and it seemed to me that the man was about forty and the woman a little older, although I could not distinguish the features of either one. I asked for the telescope and pointed it toward the woman. First I confusedly saw a large face; then I distinguished her expression, the expression of a woman resigned to her fate—a life of sacrifice. She had gray hair, a forehead deeply furrowed, large and melancholy eyes; a certain grave and thoughtful look that revealed complete resignation to suffering.

To all appearances my friend has guessed rightly, I thought, and I then directed the telescope toward the man. At that moment he turned toward me and showed his full face. "Who is he?" I asked myself. "Is it possible?" I opened the telescope a little more. "But it is he. There is no doubt—it is the face that I have seen hundreds of times among displays of photographs." I remembered, when I saw it, something that happened once, something long ago forgotten.

"Well?" asked my friend. "Is it or is it not the face of a merchant, without education, and with a good deal of conceit?"

I could not smile now as I had done before. I told him that really this neighbor of his was not an attractive-looking man, but that I remembered seeing him before—that I wished to find out who he was, and that I was going to inform myself as to the matter.

The next day I went directly to call on him to obtain the facts in the case, because, as I told him, I wanted to tell his story to a friend of mine. As he was accustomed to receiving such calls, he treated me courteously, and told everything with great indifference, as though

he were speaking of some one else. He spoke of the woman and of her life.

"We have lived together for ten years," he said as he concluded. "I am patient, she too, and we live—as God wills it. My two greatest consolations are the esteem of mankind and the devotion of this unhappy woman."

I went home. I wrote all that evening and all the following morning. The next day I went to see my friend with the manuscript.

It was the hour when the "merchant" was enjoying the breeze on the balcony. After a little, I alluded to the aversion which my friend had felt for him.

"You must get over that," I said, "for you have made a mistake."

"It can't be!" he exclaimed with his usual self-confidence.

"Lay all joking aside," I replied, "and read these pages. It is an historical narrative that I have written since I last saw you. The principal actor is your despised 'merchant.' I give you my word of honor that, save a few necessary explanations, I have not altered the story in any way.

My friend took the manuscript and began to read. After a little, he raised his eyes, looked at the man on the balcony, then looked at me and continued to read. As he progressed, he looked oftener at me and at the man; at the man and at me, and he became graver and graver. When he had reached the last lines, a cry of admiration escaped him, and he jumped up, took my hand, and asked in a moved voice: "Will you give me your word of honor that it is all true?"

"Every word," I answered.

"And that he is the man?" he pursued.

"And that he is the man," I repeated.

Without another word he took his hat and with quick steps walked off. I went to the window, saw him cross the square and enter the door of the opposite house. After a few minutes, I remarked that the man on the balcony had disappeared. Shortly afterward, he came

out again, and a few moments later my friend recrossed the square.

"I know you!" I said to myself, running to open the door for him. "I know what you went to do." My friend appeared at the door. "You," I continued aloud, "you went to kiss that man's forehead."

He looked at me, smiled, and then, throwing his arms around my neck, he answered with a cry of joy: "No! I was not worthy of that. I went to kiss his hands."

II.

It was the summer of the year 1861, at the time when rumors of the deeds of the brigands were flying all over Europe; those historic days when Pietropaolo carried in his pocket the chin of a "liberal" with its beard in napoleonic style: when in Montenuleto those who cried, "*Viva l'Italia!*" were buried alive under a pile of corpses; when in Viesti they ate the flesh of the peasants who dared to disobey the orders of their robbers; when Colonel Negri, near Pontelandolfo, saw the bloody members of the soldiers disposed as trophies and hanging from the windows; when the poor Lieutenant Baci, wounded and captured in a fight, was killed after eight hours of horrible tortures; when parties of maddened people left their village in the night to go and welcome triumphantly the brigands; when stacks of grain were fired, houses demolished, whole families captured; when people were hung and scalped and butchered, and when, to stimulate and increase the general slaughter, from the left side of the Tiber came arms, money and benedictions.

On one of the last days of July, a little after sunrise, in a deserted valley of the province of Cagritanata, a soldier on horseback moved forward toward San Severo. He had started on the previous night to carry an order from the colonel to the commander of a "colonna mobile." He carried under his coat an answer to that order, in which the commander said that he would go at eight o'clock the next morning to a hiding-place in a neighboring mountain where he knew there was a

band of brigands, which of late had been terrorizing the neighborhood. The bearer of the letter was a man of thirty, tall, spare, with very bright eyes, a pointed moustache and that frown between the eyebrows which denotes the habit of thought. His expression was one of deep gravity, to which his large hat, with its two points, lent a shadow of sadness; and the sternness and decision of his bearing denoted a strength both of body and of soul that answered well to the necessities of the times and the surroundings.

He trotted along a winding path, looking closely here and there at the abandoned pastures, the rocky mountains, the bright, clear sky, without hearing other sound than the clatter of his horse's hoofs and the jingling of his sword. All of a sudden, as he was passing between two high, thick hedges, he saw a light and he heard a shot. As he pulled up and grasped his pistol, the horse staggered; and as he stooped to see if he were wounded, he felt himself caught from behind. As he turned, a man jumped down upon him from the hedge; behind this man, like a shadow, came a third one;—he did not have time to shoot nor to dismount nor to defend himself. He was thrown to the ground. There he tried to resist; he shook himself, he bit and struck out, but he was unable to rise. Utterly exhausted, he surrendered at last and allowed himself to be disarmed. In the fury of the fight, surrounded by a cloud of dust, he had succeeded, by a rapid movement, in putting the message into his mouth without attracting the attention of his assailants. They tied his hands behind his back and lifted him to his feet; they hurriedly hung his sword to his neck, and attached his cloak and valise there also. They pulled the horse behind the hedge, and then they marched him across the fields, pushing him, hitting him, swearing at and threatening him.

After half-an-hour, when distant enough from the main road to have no fear of discovery, they slackened their pace. They had reached the mountain's side,—a spot among the trees where neither house nor cottage could be seen. The soldier, bent under the weight

which he was carrying, showed no signs of terror, nor anger, though his face, pale but unmoved, indicated that he knew the end reserved for him, and in his heart he was prepared for it. He did not forget that to fall into the hands of the brigands in those terrible days meant death. Therefore there was in his features already a little of the solemnity of death; and he who might not have known it needed only to look him in the eyes to say: "That man is going to die!"

The brigand who preceded him turned around now and then to gaze at him, half through curiosity and half through suspicion. The one who walked at his side and seemed to be the chief of the band looked now at the prisoner, now at his companion, and exchanged with the latter an occasional triumphant smile.

"There!" he said, suddenly hanging his musket on the neck of the soldier, "carry that for me."

"Carry mine too," added the one who marched in front, imitating his companion. "And you?" asked the chief, turning to the third brigand who walked behind and who seemed the youngest.

"I?" he answered, "I prefer to keep mine. You never can tell."

"Absurd," remarked the other, looking at him with contempt. Then, leaning toward the soldier, and slapping him on the back, "My friend," he continued, "now you will tell us where you were going."

The soldier did not utter a sound.

"Oh! oh!" exclaimed the brigand, stooping to pick up a stick. "Did you hear me?" and he hit him on the hands. The carabiniere walked on without a word. "You shall speak, my friend," repeated the brigand, throwing the stick away. "They all begin like you, and you will finish like the rest. You too are made of flesh, and when you feel the cold steel, you too will cry—you can rest assured of that." So saying he pushed him in a path that followed the bed of a stream; they went straight ahead for a short while; then they passed a small bridge, walked around a small plateau and then began to climb a narrow path among the rocks. The

soldier, his neck bound by the straps of the muskets, his hands tied, almost suffocated by his uniform, climbed unsteadily. Almost blinded by the perspiration dripping from his brow, he stumbled against the stones and fell on his knees. He got up with difficulty only to fall again, and the brigands hit him and abused him; they pushed him up with kicks, laughing at him and crying: "Up, you lazy beast! When you catch us, you tie us to your horses! Every one has his day, my friend."

When about half-way up the mountain, they halted. They had reached a place where the rocks were cut like a wall surrounding a habitable enclosure, with bunches of grass and trees here and there; under a caved rock, rounded like a tunnel, there was a small space of even ground, surrounded by heavy stones half-falling from above, the smaller ones placed among the large ones as if some one had begun to build a wall. The rocks served as roof and walls to a wooden shed which occupied a quarter of the cave. The small caves hollowed from the rocks served as storage-rooms. There was a stairway, from the top of which the whole surrounding country was visible. The entrance was through an opening not much larger than the body of a man. From the outside, no one would have thought the place inhabited; the inside looked like an armory. In the small caves were glasses, tin cups, meats, bread, knives; from the points of the rocks hung coats and bottles. In one corner were some cinders and lighted coals, and the rock above was blackened by the smoke. Around this lay straw and blankets in bundles. Looking up, beyond the stone, and behind and in front one could see only rock after rock, open caves and immense stones, with a rare tree here and there that seemed to grow like a bundle of grass. Underneath were the cut sides of the mountain; beyond these, the valley; and beyond this, other mountains.

A man standing on the last step of a stairway, with his elbow leaning on the rocks and his face hidden between two stones, from which he looked, as though from a little tower, was awaiting the company. When

he saw the soldier, he clapped his hands on the stone to express his joy, and he began to follow his steps closely, swearing and gesticulating every time a brigand hit him, as if he wished to give strength to the hitter and increase the sufferings of the prisoner.

When they were a few steps away from the armory, he descended, to await them at the door. They finally arrived. The soldier, who was pushed inside, fell on the floor in the middle of the room. The others followed him and seated themselves around on the stones, perspiring and out of breath, throwing here and there their satchels, their hats and their arms. They remained silent for a few moments to recover their breath and wipe their faces.

"Here is a jolly prisoner!" exclaimed the chief, turning to the person who had come down to receive them.

"And alive!" continued the latter. Then seeing the spurs, he asked, "Where is the horse?"

"Do not speak of it," answered the chief, enraged. "I must break this d—d musket to pieces. I hit the animal, instead of the man!" and here he narrated what had happened.

"Never mind," interrupted his companion soothingly. "It has been a good catch." He came up to the soldier and helped him to rise; after having looked at him for a while with a stupid stare of curiosity, he relieved him of the muskets, the cloak and the sword. Then he took off his hat, smiled and pushed him aside. The soldier, tired out, leaned against the wall and began to look at the brigands, one by one, with the slow gaze of a sick man, whose thoughts are of a better world.

The brigands began to go through his valise. Their faces were worthy of the place and their occupation. The one who seemed to be the chief was a man of about forty, small but muscular, with a large head; shoulders reaching to his ears; and bent legs with strong calves. From forehead to feet he was heavy, short, flat. He was dark, with a beard and moustache, and his hat so concealed him that only a part of his forehead and the

top of his cheeks could be seen. Of the other three, two seemed brothers; they had the same short forehead, the same bull-dog nose, the same furtive eyes, the same mouth without lips, curved like a semicircle and downcast, the same pointed chin without any beard, and both were small and nervous. All three had in their eyes something covert, keen and unhealthy,—that which expresses wild recklessness, mixed with superstitious ferocity and craven cowardice. They were long-bodied, and this, with something in their gestures and in their walk—something of soft and springing elasticity—made them resemble tigers. They wore high, soft hats, long gaiters and large jackets open in front. Between the jacket and the trousers hung a shirt in folds, fastened by a large blue sash.

The fourth brigand, who seemed to be the youngest, had a less repulsive face. He too was small and beardless, like the two brothers.

"Now," said the chief, when they had looked over the contents of the valise, "make him take off his coat. Then we will eat something and afterward proceed with our investigation."

The two brothers came nearer to the soldier, and one untied the rope around his arms, while the other held a dagger to his breast. His arms, loosened, fell to his sides like the arms of a corpse.

"Off with your uniform!" ordered one of the brigands.

The soldier looked at them, astonished, with a frown on his forehead and his lips between his teeth. The youngest brigand regarded him sadly.

"You," said the chief to the latter, who was near the door, "go to your post!"

The young man, obeying the order, mounted the stairway. He leaned his elbows on the stones, put his head between the rocks and remained quiet.

"Off with your uniform!" repeated the brigands, lifting their hands all together.

"Slap him so that the marks of your fingers will remain on his face!" exclaimed the chief.

The soldier seemed to wake up as though a wound

had reopened; then he bent his head and obediently took off his uniform. The two brigands seized the coat and searched the pockets, the sleeves, every part of it, and then threw it under the wooden shed. One of them then went through the prisoner's trousers and reported to the chief:

"Nothing!"

"Bad for him," answered the latter. "Tie him to that iron ring."

The two desperadoes tied the soldier, with his arms crossed behind his back, to a hook attached to one of the poles of the wooden shed. The wretched man was as white as death, and his teeth chattered as though he had an ague. The three brigands brought out of the caves a few provisions. They seated themselves on the stones and began to eat slowly, talking inconsequently, as those do who pay more attention to what they eat than to what they say.

"Did you hear the news from Casalvecchio?"

"Regarding Don Alessio! Oh yes! Two hundred scudi to redeem him!"

"Paid?"

"Paid!"

"What a catch!"

"And three hundred for the mayor!"

"They were reasonable! He and his brother between them own the grounds two miles above the Fortore. But the best of all has been at Binasi. Six horses, one thousand scudi and eight bags of cheese, all in one lump!" Here he threw a piece of orange-peel at the soldier.

"And I hear there has been some trouble at Cerignola between the band of Salvatore Codipietro and the Piedmontese. They were taken by surprise. It was through that spy of a mayor. Seven captured."

"With the chief?"

"No."

"Killed?"

The brigand nodded.

"Madonna!" exclaimed the others, and turning to

the soldier, he added, "Did you hear that? But we shall repay you, do not doubt it! The day will come when from every tree on these mountains will hang the body of a Piedmontese."

Here he swallowed a glass of wine.

"Look," said another, pointing to the soldier, "he is thinking."

"What are you thinking of?" asked the chief, stroking his moustache.

"Of your mother?" asked the first.

"Where did you leave her?"

"Let us hear!"

They all turned around to look at him. The poor young fellow shut his eyes and kept them closed for a while; then he opened them wide. They were moist, and he looked far away beyond the mountains. The three brigands smiled.

"But the best of it all," remarked one, "is that he does not speak. What is it?"

"Modesty," answered the other with an ugly smile.

"Fear," corrected the chief.

The soldier shook his head as though to deny this.

"No?" exclaimed the brigand, jumping to his feet. "Now we shall see. This man was carrying some order so as to have us captured," he said to his companions decidedly. "We have already lost too much time. Make him spit."

"Make him spit!" echoed the others, rising.

The prisoner looked up as though to say, "I am ready!"

The three brigands stood in front of him.

Any one who might at that moment have observed the young man who was on guard, would have seen that he trembled like a leaf, and turned around so as to conceal his countenance from the others, for it was white with terror. The chief noticed it and with an imperious motion bade him mind his business.

"Now," continued the chief, in a loud voice, and turning toward the soldier, "Where do you come from?"

The prisoner frowned and looked at his tormentor

with a steadfast expression which showed a will stronger than the other's, and did not answer. The brigand, without adding another word, gave him a terrible blow under the chin. The cracking of broken teeth was distinctly heard all over the place. "Will you answer now?"

The soldier lowered his head and let the blood that filled his mouth flow out. Then, lifting his eyes to the face of the brigand, he stared at him with an expression of unmoved self-possession and shook his head.

The brigand bit his lips and exchanged with his companions a malignant smile. Then he calmly put his hand into his pocket, took a knife out, unbuttoned the soldier's shirt and brought the point of the blade to his throat.

The victim shook convulsively. "No fear," murmured the brigand, and he ran the knife slowly and lightly along the man's body from the throat to the waist as he would have done were he tracing a line on a table.

On the breast of the prisoner appeared a long red line, like the cut of a razor, that immediately disappeared under the drops of blood that ran down like tears under his clothing to the ground.

"Ah! Ah!" cried the chief in a brutal voice. "You begin to see it! eh?"

"See how he bleeds!" remarked the other.

The younger brigand covered his face with his hands.

"Will you speak now?" asked the chief again.

The soldier watched the dropping blood and then looked up, fixed his eyes in the face of the brigand and with the same expression as before shook his head.

The three murderers turned to one another astonished and enraged.

"You want to die, don't you, you fool!" exclaimed the chief, putting his face close to the soldier's, and shaking an open hand near his cheek. "Do you not see that you are in our hands, alone, and that we can cut you open like a dog? What do you hope! Do you ex-

pect your friends to come and deliver you? Speak! Let us hear your voice! Speak one word!"

The soldier was silent. Maddened at his obstinacy, one of the brigands raised his knife, but the chief held his arm, saying, "No! not the knife." He grasped a musket, "I must try this." And lifting his arm he brought the weapon down on the prisoner's feet with such force that the bones cracked.

The unhappy man gave a deep cry of pain, and shook as though attacked by epilepsy. But at the same moment, gathering renewed energy from his agony, he stamped his wounded foot upon the ground, lifted his head, and cried with a roar, "No!"

All three of the brigands then seized him by the neck and were just about to strangle him, when the young man who was on watch, rendered daring through the horror that was overcoming him, cried frantically:

"Kill him at once, by G—! Kill him with a musket-shot. Why make him suffer so?"

The three brigands, astonished at his audacity, turned to look at him. But the astonishment did not last.

The chief threw himself against the daring young man, and with a blow in the face sent his head against the stone. Stunned, he assumed his former position, without adding a word. But as he looked down the side of the mountain he gave a slight start, bent further forward and remained thus, silent and looking fixedly down the mountain slope. The chief of the brigands did not notice this, however, but turned to his victim. He was white, and he ground his teeth and trembled with rage. Even his companions looked at him with fear. He laid one of his large hands on the head of the soldier, raised the other with his finger turned up, as though to menace him, and looking at him sideways with bloodshot eyes, he murmured in a hoarse voice: "Listen! It is a bad idea of yours to be obstinate with me. You do not know me. I have made the hair of others, who had more pluck than you, fairly stand up on their heads. You have no idea of what I can make you suffer. I can keep digging a stiletto into you until

morning without killing you. I can torture you until you will have no more any human shape. I might pull the eyes out of your head. You know what has happened to others. Do not dare me. Say what you must before the blood goes to my head."

With these last words he withdrew his hand from the prisoner's head. He looked at it,—there were hairs on it. Enraged, he threw them in the soldier's face, and a hair stuck to his mouth. To free himself of this, he spat. The brigands, taking this act to be one of contempt, were unable to restrain themselves any longer. All three together, with a cry of rage, fell on him like wild beasts and began quickly and silently to torture him with the points of their daggers, with their nails, their teeth, their knees and their feet. Now and then one or the other stopped a moment to take breath, saying, "Slowly," in order to keep one another from killing him. There was no sound except the heavy breathing of the three murderers, the clashing of the daggers and the dry sobs of the victim. They were blind, drunken animals; they did not look any more like three men, but like a monster with three bodies entwined around a helpless victim. They represented the worst conceivable combination of fiendish cowardice and ferocity.

"Do not kill him yet," began again the young man on guard, turning quickly first toward the brigands and then toward the valley below, and crying louder and louder, as though he wished to cover an approaching noise. "Do not kill him yet! Wait! He will speak! He will tell all! But if you kill him, you will not know anything! Try again! He has motioned that he wants to speak! But you will kill him! I shall stab him with my dagger if you don't!—Down with your daggers! Hit him with your fists.—Don't you see that he is dying?"

Without ceasing to scream out sentences like these, he threw a look out toward the foot of the plateau and then he jumped in the middle of the cave. He changed all of a sudden his tone of voice, and with an accent of

contempt he continued: "Ah, cowards! Three against a dying man!"

"Fool!" cried the chief, throwing himself with uplifted dagger against him.

"Too late!" replied the latter with an expression of joy, and pointing toward the door. "Look!"

At the same moment, while the other brigands, admonished by the young man, threw a mantle over their victim, and while the chief grasped a musket, a noise of arms and steps was heard and bayonets gleamed in the sunshine in front of the cave's entrance. From the top of the rock a mass of soldiers invaded the stronghold, and in a second surrounded, overcame, disarmed and threw to the ground all those they found in the cave. A few moments of silence followed, during which nothing could be heard except the panting of the soldiers, who were out of breath.

"Help the dying!" cried, all of a sudden, the young brigand, who, like the rest, knelt with his hands to the ground under the musket of a carabiniere.

"Who is dying?" asked the captain, coming forward, dusty and panting.

"There in the corner," answered the young man pointing.

All turned. No one could distinguish anything.

"Under the cloak," continued the brigand.

The captain, followed by the eyes of all, walked to the corner, seized the mantle and tore it away. A general cry of horror rose at the sickening sight which was thus revealed. The miserable prisoner on his knees, with his hands braided behind his back and his head falling on his chest, was entirely covered with cuts and blood so that he seemed to have been scalped. He tried to look up.

"Untie him immediately!" cried the captain. "Give him water!"

Three soldiers came forward, untied him, seated him, and began to examine his wounds; the others, maddened at the sight, hit the brigands with the stock of their muskets.

"Down with your arms!" ordered the captain, and turning to the youngest brigand, he commanded, "You must speak!"

The soldiers who held him allowed him to arise.

"When was that man captured?" asked the captain. "Tell the truth before you die."

"That man," began the young fellow in a breathless voice, and trembling from horror and fear, "that soldier was captured this morning. They brought him here, they tied him,—they wanted him to speak,—he refused to do so; they jumped on him. I saw it all. My God, my God!"

"But who are you?" exclaimed the captain, pulling off the young man's hat. A mass of curling hair fell over his shoulders. They all murmured as they turned to look at him, "A woman!"

"Yes," she cried desperately, "a woman! They stole me fifteen days ago. They held a knife to my throat and took me along. But I have not stained my hands with blood! No! I swear to it! I only accompanied them so that they would not kill me. I am a poor peasant girl—from San Severo."

"But why did you not shoot one of these murderers?"

"I did not have the courage. They would have tortured me. You ought to see what they do! I thought I should go insane. Oh! if you had seen! But he"—(and she pointed to the wounded soldier) . . . "he has been a god! He stood it all without a murmur, without a cry."

"Drag these cowards to the feet of their victim," ordered the captain.

The prisoners were dragged in front of the wounded man, whose head had been bandaged with a handkerchief, one end of which covered his eyes.

"I am here," exclaimed the captain, bending toward the unhappy man, who was beginning to revive. "You are safe! You are among your companions! Courage! Look, your murderers kneel before you!"

The soldier raised his head slowly and shivered. Then he extended his hand, laying it on the head of the

chief of the brigands, then he withdrew it, smiled with his blood-covered mouth, leaned his head forward, and spat something out upon the ground.

"What is this?" asked the captain, picking up the thing, white and soft, which had fallen from the mouth of the wounded man.

"Your—answer—to the colonel—" whispered the soldier.

"To the colonel of San Severo? My answer? The one I gave you this morning?"

The soldier nodded. The captain threw himself upon him, put one arm around his neck and kissed him on his forehead; then he sprang up and turning to his soldiers, commanded: "Bow to this hero, my brave boys! He carried to the colonel my letter, in which I stated when and where I was going. If the brigands had read it, they would have been safe. He put it in his mouth and he did not speak, in order that he might not betray himself, and he stood silently all these terrible tortures. He is a hero! He is a martyr!"

"He is!" they all cried unanimously.

"Kiss his feet, cowards," ordered the chief to the brigands.

One after the other, crawling like worms, they kissed the feet of the wounded man.

"Captain!" cried the woman suddenly, as though out of her mind: "I could have given the alarm, when you were coming. I did not give it. I let you come. I ask one favor in exchange. I can never return again to my home. Let them shoot me!"

"No!" cried the wounded hero with a last effort.

They all turned to him.

"You," continued the miserable man with a low voice, pointing a bloody hand toward the woman. "You must do a merciful act."

"What? Speak! My God! I ask it for charity's sake!" cried the woman, throwing herself at his feet with clasped hands.

"Accompany me," murmured the man.

"Where?" pleaded the woman.

"Everywhere!"

They all looked at one another astonished!

"What do you mean?" asked the woman.

"You have not seen . . . all my wounds," said the soldier. "Look!"

He pulled the handkerchief from his forehead. They all crowded nearer, gave him one anxious look and then uttered a cry of horror and of pity. His eyes were gone. The man was blind.

"Death!" screamed all the soldiers, hitting the brigands with their muskets and kicking them.

"Death!" The voice of the captain was lost in the tumult and the soldiers ran out, dragging the murderers with them.

"Will you do this act of mercy?" asked the wounded man of the woman when they remained alone together. She lifted her eyes to heaven and murmured:

"My life is yours!"

They joined hands, and a discharge of musketry in the valley below seemed to seal the compact between them.

The rude thrusts at America in which Mr. Oscar Wilde indulged after his visit to our shores, appear freely in this story from his pen, first published in the *Court and Society Review*. The delicious absurdities of the situation which he describes are amusing enough, however, to make us forget, as we read, the slight abrasion of our self-conceit.

THE CANTERVILLE GHOST.

WHEN Mr. Hiram B. Otis, the American Minister, bought Canterville Chase, every one told him he was doing a very foolish thing, as there was no doubt at all that the place was haunted. Indeed, Lord Canterville himself, who was a man of the strictest honor, had felt it his duty to mention the fact to Mr. Otis when they came to discuss terms.

"We have not cared to live in the place ourselves," said Lord Canterville, "since my grand-aunt, the Dowager Duchess of Bolton, was frightened into a fit from which she never really recovered, by two skeleton hands being placed on her shoulders as she was dressing for dinner, and I feel bound to tell you, Mr. Otis, that the ghost has been seen by several living members of my family, as well as by the rector of the parish, the Rev. Augustus Dampier, who is a Fellow of King's College, Cambridge."

"My lord," answered the minister, "I will take the furniture and the ghost at a valuation. I reckon that, if there were really such a thing as a ghost in Europe, we'd have it at home in a very short time in one of our public museums or on the road as a show."

"I fear that the ghost exists," said Lord Canterville, smiling, "though it may have resisted the overtures of your enterprising impresarios. It has been well known for three centuries, since 1584 in fact, and always makes its appearance before the death of any member of our family."

"Well, so does the family doctor, for that matter, Lord Canterville. But there is no such thing, sir, as a ghost, and I guess the laws of nature are not going to be suspended for the British aristocracy."

"You are certainly very natural in America," answered Lord Canterville, who did not quite understand Mr. Otis's last observation, "and if you don't mind a ghost in the house, it is all right. Only you must remember that I warned you."

A few weeks after this the purchase was concluded, and at the close of the season the Minister and his family went down to Canterville Chase. Mrs. Otis, who, as Miss Lucretia R. Tappan of West Fifty-third-st., had been a celebrated New-York belle, was now a very handsome, middle-aged woman, with fine eyes and a superb profile. Many American ladies on leaving their native land take to chronic ill health, under the impression that it is a form of European refinement, but Mrs. Otis had never fallen into this error. She had a magnificent constitution, and a really wonderful amount of animal spirits. Indeed, in many respects, she was quite English, and was an excellent example of the fact that we have really everything in common with America nowadays, except, of course, language.

Her eldest son, christened Washington by his parents in a moment of patriotism, which he never ceased to regret, was a fair-haired, rather good-looking young man, who had qualified himself for American diplomacy by leading the german at the Newport Casino for three successive seasons, and even in London was well known as an excellent dancer. Gardenias and the peerage were his only weaknesses; otherwise he was extremely sensible. Miss Virginia E. Otis was a little girl of fifteen, lithe and lovely as a fawn, and with a fine freedom in her large blue eyes. She was a wonderful amazon, and had once raced old Lord Bilton on her pony twice round the park, winning by a length-and-a-half, just in front of the Achilles statue, to the huge delight of the young Duke of Cheshire, who proposed for her on the spot, and was sent back to Eton that

very night by his guardians, in floods of tears. After Virginia came the twins, who were usually called "The Stars and Stripes," as they were always getting swished. They were delightful boys, and the only true republicans of the family.

As Canterville Chase is seven miles from Ascot, the nearest railway station, Mr. Otis had telegraphed for a wagonette to meet them, and they started on their drive in high spirits.

Standing on the steps to receive them was an old woman, neatly dressed in black silk, with a white cap and apron. This was Mrs. Umney, the housekeeper, whom Mrs. Otis, at Lady Canterville's earnest request, had consented to keep on in her former position. She made them each a low curtsey as they alighted, and said in a quaint, old-fashioned manner, "I bid you welcome to Canterville Chase." Following her, they passed through the fine Tudor hall into the library, a long, low room, panelled in black oak, at the end of which was a large stained-glass window. Here they found tea laid out for them, and, after taking off their wraps, they sat down and began to look round, while Mrs. Umney waited on them.

Suddenly Mrs. Otis caught sight of a dull red stain on the floor just by the fireplace, and quite unconscious of what it really signified, said to Mrs. Umney, "I am afraid something has been spilt there."

"Yes, madam," replied the old housekeeper in a low voice, "blood has been spilt on that spot."

"How horrid!" cried Mrs. Otis. "I don't at all care for blood-stains in a sitting-room. It must be removed at once."

The old woman smiled, and answered in the same low, mysterious voice: "It is the blood of Dame Eleanore de Canterville, who was murdered on that very spot by her own husband, Sir Simon de Canterville, in 1575. Sir Simon survived her nine years, and disappeared suddenly under very mysterious circumstances. His body has never been discovered, but his guilty spirit still haunts the Chase. The blood-stain

has been much admired by tourists and others, and cannot be removed."

"That is all nonsense," cried Washington Otis. "Pinkerton's Champion Stain Remover and Paragon Detergent will clean it up in no time," and before the terrified housekeeper could interfere, he had fallen upon his knees and was rapidly scouring the floor with a small stick of what looked like black cosmetic. In a few minutes no trace of the bloodstain could be seen.

"I knew Pinkerton would do it," he exclaimed triumphantly, as he looked round at his admiring family; but no sooner had he said these words than a terrible flash of lightning lit up the somber room, a fearful peal of thunder made them all start to their feet, and Mrs. Umney fainted.

The storm raged fiercely all that night, but nothing of particular note occurred. The next morning, however, when they came down to breakfast, they found the terrible stain of blood once again on the floor. "I don't think it can be the fault of the Paragon Detergent," said Washington, "for I have tried it with everything. It must be the ghost." He accordingly rubbed out the stain a second time, but the second morning it appeared again. The third morning also it was there, though the library had been locked up at night by Mr. Otis himself and the key carried upstairs. The whole family were now quite interested; Mr. Otis began to suspect that he had been too dogmatic in his denial of the existence of ghosts, Mrs. Otis expressed her intention of joining the Psychical Society, and Washington prepared a long letter to Messrs. Meyers and Gurney on the subject of the Permanence of Sanguineous Stains when connected with Crime. That night all doubts about the objective existence of phantasma were removed forever.

The day had been warm and sunny; and, in the cool of the evening, the whole family went out to drive. They did not return home till nine o'clock, when they had a light supper. The conversation in no way turned upon ghosts, so there were not even those primary con-

ditions of receptive expectation which so often precede the presentation of psychical phenomena. At eleven o'clock the family retired, and by half-past all the lights were out. Some time after, Mr. Otis was awakened by a curious noise in the corridor outside his room. It sounded like the clank of metal, and seemed to be coming nearer every moment. He got up at once, struck a match and looked at the time. It was exactly one o'clock. He was quite calm and felt his pulse, which was not at all feverish. The strange noise still continued, and with it he heard distinctly the sound of footsteps. He put on his slippers, took a small oblong phial out of his dressing-case, and opened the door. Right in front of him he saw in the wan moonlight an old man of terrible aspect. His eyes were as red burning coals; long gray hair fell over his shoulders in matted coils; his garments, which were of antique cut, were soiled and ragged, and from his wrists and ankles hung heavy manacles and rusty gyves.

"My dear sir," said Mr. Otis, "I really must insist on your oiling those chains, and have brought you for that purpose a small bottle of the Tammany Rising Sun Lubricator. It is said to be completely efficacious upon one application, and there are several testimonials to that effect on the wrapper from some of our most eminent native divines. I will leave it here for you by the bedroom candles, and will be happy to supply you with more should you require it." With these words the United States Minister laid the bottle down on a marble table and, closing his door, retired to rest.

For a moment the Canterville ghost stood quite motionless in natural indignation; then, dashing the bottle violently upon the polished floor, he fled down the corridor, uttering hollow groans and emitting a ghastly green light. Just, however, as he reached the top of the great oak staircase, a door was flung open, two little white-robed figures appeared and a large pillow whizzed past his head! There was evidently no time to be lost, so hastily adopting the Fourth Dimension of Space as a means of escape, he vanished through

the wainscoting and the house became quite quiet. On reaching a small secret chamber in the left wing he leaned up against a moonbeam to recover his breath, and began to try and realize his position. Never, in a brilliant and uninterrupted career of three hundred years, had he been so grossly insulted. No ghost in history had ever been treated in this manner. Accordingly he determined to have vengeance, and remained till daylight in an attitude of deep thought.

The next morning, when the Otis family met at breakfast, they discussed the ghost at some length. The United States Minister was naturally a little annoyed to find that his present had not been accepted. "I have no wish," he said, "to do the ghost any personal injury, and I must say that, considering the length of time he has been in the house, I don't think it is at all polite to throw pillows at him"—a very just remark, at which, I am sorry to say, the twins burst into shouts of laughter. "Upon the other hand," he continued, "if he really declines to use the Rising Sun Lubricator, we shall have to take his chains from him. It would be quite impossible to sleep with such a noise going on outside the bedrooms." For the rest of the week, however, they were undisturbed, the only thing that excited any attention being the continual renewal of the blood-stain on the library floor. This certainly was very strange, as the door was always locked at night by Mr. Otis and the windows kept closely barred. The chameleon-like color, also, of the stain excited a good deal of comment. Some mornings it was a dull, almost Indian, red; then it would be vermilion, then a rich purple, and once, when they came down for family prayers, they found it a bright emerald green. These kaleidoscopic changes naturally amused the party very much, and bets on the subject were freely made every evening. The only person who did not enter into the joke was little Virginia, who, for some unexplained reason, was always a good deal distressed at the sight of the blood-stain, and very nearly cried the morning it was emerald green.

The next appearance of the ghost was on Sunday night. Shortly after they had gone to bed they were suddenly alarmed by a fearful crash in the hall. Rushing down-stairs, they found that a large suit of old armor had become detached from its stand and had fallen on the stone floor, while seated in a high-backed chair was the Canterville ghost, rubbing his knees with an expression of acute agony on his face. The twins, having brought their pea-shooters with them, at once discharged two pellets on him with that accuracy of aim which can only be attained by long and careful practice on a writing-master, while the United States Minister covered him with his revolver and called upon him, in accordance with Californian etiquette, to hold up his hands! The ghost started up with a wild shriek of rage and swept through them like a mist, extinguishing Washington Otis's candle as he passed, and so leaving them all in total darkness. On reaching the top of the staircase, he recovered himself and determined to give his celebrated peal of demoniac laughter. This he had on more than one occasion found extremely useful. It was said to have turned Lord Raker's wig gray in a single night, and had certainly made three of Lady Canterville's French governesses give warning before their month was up. He accordingly laughed his most horrible laugh, till the old vaulted roof rang and rang again, but hardly had the fearful echo died away when a door opened and Mrs. Otis came out in a light blue dressing-gown. "I am afraid you are far from well," she said, "and have brought you a bottle of Dr. Dobell's tincture. If it is indigestion, you will find it a most excellent remedy." The ghost glared at her in fury, and began at once to make preparations for turning himself into a large black dog, an accomplishment for which he was justly renowned and to which the family doctor always attributed the permanent idiocy of Lord Canterville's uncle, the Honorable Thomas Horton. The sound of approaching footsteps, however, made him hesitate in his fell purpose, so he contented himself with becoming faintly phosphorescent, and vanished

with a deep churchyard groan just as the twins came up to him.

For some days after this he was extremely ill, and hardly stirred out of his room at all except to keep the blood-stain in proper repair. However, by taking great care of himself he recovered, and resolved to make a third attempt to frighten the United States Minister and his family. He selected Friday, August 17, for his appearance, and spent most of that day in looking over his wardrobe, ultimately deciding in favor of a large slouched hat with a red feather, a winding-sheet frilled at the wrists and neck and a rusty dagger. Toward evening a violent storm of rain came on, and the wind was so high that all the windows and doors in the old house shook and rattled. In fact it was just such weather as he loved. His plan of action was this: He was to make his way quietly to Washington Otis's room, gibber at him from the foot of the bed and stab himself three times in the throat to the sound of low music. He bore Washington a special grudge, being quite aware that it was he who was in the habit of removing the famous Canterville blood-stain by means of Pinkerton's Paragon Detergent. Having reduced the reckless and foolhardy youth to a condition of abject terror, he was to proceed to the room occupied by the United States Minister and his wife, and there to place a clammy hand on Mrs. Otis's forehead, while he hissed into her trembling husband's ear the awful secrets of the charnel-house. With regard to little Virginia he had not quite made up his mind. She had never insulted him in any way, and was pretty and gentle. A few hollow groans from the wardrobe he thought would be more than sufficient, or if that failed to wake her, he might grabble at the counterpane with palsy-twitching fingers. As for the twins, he was quite determined to teach them a lesson. The first thing to be done was, of course, to sit upon their chests, so as to produce the stifling sensation of nightmare. Then, as they occupied the same bed, to be between them in the form of a green, icy-cold corpse till they became paralyzed with

fear, and finally to throw off the winding-sheet and crawl about the room with white-bleached bones and one rolling eyeball, in the character of "Dumb Daniel, or the Suicide's Skeleton," a role in which he had on more than one occasion produced a great effect, and which he considered quite equal to his famous part of "Martin the Maniac, or the Masked Mystery."

At half-past ten he heard the family going to bed. For some time he was disturbed by wild shrieks of laughter from the twins, who, with the light-hearted gayety of schoolboys, were evidently amusing themselves before they retired to rest, but at a quarter-past eleven all was still, and as midnight sounded, he sallied forth. The owl beat against the window-panes, the raven croaked from the old yew tree, and the wind wandered moaning round the house like a lost soul; but the Otis family slept unconscious of their doom, and high above the rain and storm he could hear the steady snoring of the Minister for the United States. He stepped stealthily out of the wainscoting, with an evil smile on his cruel, wrinkled mouth, and the moon hid her face in a cloud as he stole past the great oriel window, where his own arms and those of his murdered wife were blazoned in azure and gold. On and on he glided like an evil shadow, the very darkness seeming to loathe him as he passed. Once he thought he heard something call, and stopped; but it was only the baying of a dog from the Red Farm, and he went on, muttering strange sixteenth-century curses and ever and anon brandishing the rusty dagger in the midnight air. Finally he reached the corner of the passage that led to luckless Washington's room. For a moment he paused there, the wind blowing his long gray locks about his head, and twisting into grotesque and fantastic folds the nameless horror of the dead man's shroud. Then the clock struck the quarter, and he felt the time was come. He chuckled to himself and turned the corner, but no sooner had he done so than, with a piteous wail of anguish, he fell back and hid his blanched face in his long bony hands. Right in front of him

was standing a horrible spectre, motionless as a carven image and monstrous as a madman's dream. Its head was bald and burnished; its face round, fat and white; and hideous laughter seemed to have writhed its features into an eternal grin. From the eyes streamed rays of scarlet light, the mouth was a wide well of fire, and a hideous garment, like to his own, swathed with its silent snows the Titan form. On its breast was a placard with strange writing in antique characters, some scroll of shame it seemed, some record of wild sins, some awful calendar of crime, and with its right hand it bore aloft a falchion of gleaming steel.

Never having seen a ghost before, he naturally was terribly frightened, and after a second hasty glance at the awful phantom, he fled back to his room, tripping up in his long winding-sheet as he sped down the corridor, and finally dropping the rusty dagger into the Minister's jack-boots, where it was found in the morning by the butler. Once in the privacy of his own apartment, he flung himself down on a small pallet-bed and hid his face under the clothes. After a time, however, the brave old Canterville spirit asserted itself, and he determined to go and speak to the other ghost as soon as it was daylight. Accordingly, just as the dawn was touching the hills with silver, he returned toward the spot where he had first laid eyes on the grisly phantom, feeling that after all two ghosts were better than one, and that by the aid of his new friend he might safely grapple with the twins. On turning the corner, however, a terrible sight met his gaze. Something had evidently happened to the spectre, for the light had entirely faded from its hollow eyes, the gleaming falchion had fallen from its hand, and it was leaning up against the wall in a strained and uncomfortable attitude. He rushed forward and seized it in his arms, when to his horror the head slipped off and rolled on the floor, the body assumed a recumbent posture, and he found himself clasping a white dimity bed-curtain, with a sweeping-brush, a kitchen cleaver, and a hollow turnip lying at his feet! Unable to understand this curious trans-

formation, he clutched the placard with feverish haste, and there, in the gray morning light, he read these fearful words:

YE OTIS GHOSTE.

YE ONLIE TRUE AND ORIGINALE SPOOK.

BEWARE OF YE IMITATIONES.

ALL OTHERS ARE COUNTERFEITE.

The whole thing flashed across him. He had been tricked, foiled and outwitted! The old Canterville look came into his eyes; he ground his toothless gums together, and raising his withered hands high above his head, swore, according to the picturesque phraseology of the old school, that when Chanticleer had sounded twice his merry horn, deeds of blood should be wrought and murder walk abroad with silent feet. Hardly had he finished this awful oath when, from the red-tiled roof of a distant homestead, a cock crew. He laughed a long, low, bitter laugh and waited. Hour after hour he waited, but the cock, for some strange reason, did not crow again. Finally, at half-past seven the arrival of the housemaids made him give up his fearful vigil, and he stalked back to his room, thinking of his vain oath and baffled purpose. There he consulted several books of ancient chivalry, of which he was exceedingly fond, and found that, on every occasion when this oath had been used, Chanticleer had always crowed a second time. "Perdition seize the naughty fowl!" he muttered; "I have seen the day when, with my stout spear, I would have run him through the gorge, and made him crow for me, an 'twere in death!" He then retired to a comfortable lead coffin, and stayed there till evening.

II.

He now gave up all hope of ever frightening this rude American family, and contented himself, as a rule, with creeping about the passages in list slippers, with a thick red muffler round his throat for fear of draughts, and a small arquebuse in case he should be attacked by the

the twins. The final blow he received occurred on September 19. He had gone downstairs to the great entrance-hall, feeling sure that there, at any rate, he would be quite unmolested. He was simply but neatly clad in a long shroud, spotted with churchyard mould, had tied up his jaw with a strip of yellow linen, and carried a small lantern and a sexton's spade. In fact, he was dressed for the character of "Jonas the Graveless, or the Corpse-Snatcher of Chertsey Barn," one of his most remarkable impersonations, and one which the Cantervilles had every reason to remember, as it was the real origin of their quarrel with their neighbor, Lord Rufford. It was about a quarter-past two o'clock in the morning, and, as far as he could ascertain, no one was stirring. As he was strolling toward the library, however, to see if there were any traces left of the blood-stain, suddenly there leaped out on him from a dark corner two figures, who waved their arms wildly above their heads, and shrieked out "BOO!" in his ear. Seized with a panic which under the circumstances was only natural, he rushed for the staircase, but found Washington Otis waiting for him there with the big garden syringe; and being thus hemmed in by his enemies on every side, and driven almost to bay, he vanished into the great iron stove, which, fortunately for him, was not lit, and had to make his way home through the flues and chimneys, arriving at his own room in a terrible state of dirt, disorder, and despair.

After this he was not seen again in any nocturnal expedition. It was generally assumed that the ghost had gone away, and, in fact, Mr. Otis wrote a letter to that effect to Lord Canterville, who, in reply, expressed his great pleasure at the news, and sent his best congratulations to the Minister's worthy wife.

The Otises, however, were deceived, for the ghost was still in the house, and though now almost an invalid, was by no means ready to let matters rest, particularly as he heard that among the guests was the young Duke of Cheshire, whose grand-uncle, Lord Francis Stilton, had once bet a hundred guineas with

Colonel Carbury that he would play dice with the Canterville ghost, and was found the next morning lying on the floor of the card-room in such a helpless paralytic state that, though he lived on to a great age, he was never able to say anything again but "Double sixes."

III.

A few days after this, Virginia and her curly-haired cavalier (the young Duke of Cheshire) went out riding on Brockley meadows, where she tore her habit so badly in getting through a hedge that, on their return home, she made up her mind to go up by the back staircase so as not to be seen. As she was running past the Tapestry Chamber, the door of which happened to be open, she fancied she saw some one inside, and thinking it was her mother's maid, who sometimes used to bring her work there, looked in to ask her to mend her habit. To her immense surprise, however, it was the Canterville ghost himself! He was sitting by the window, watching the ruined gold of the yellowing trees fly through the air, and the red leaves dancing madly down the long avenue. His head was leaning on his hand, and his whole attitude was one of extreme depression. Indeed, so forlorn and so much out of repair did he look that little Virginia, whose first idea had been to run away and lock herself in her room, was filled with pity, and determined to try and comfort him. So light was her footfall, and so deep his melancholy, that he was not aware of her presence till she spoke to him.

"I am so sorry for you," she said, "but the twins are going back to school to-morrow, and then, if you behave yourself, no one will annoy you."

"It is absurd asking me to behave myself," he answered, looking round in astonishment at the pretty little girl who had ventured to address him, "quite absurd. I must rattle my chains, and groan through keyholes, and walk about at night, if that is what you mean. It is my only reason for existing."

"It is no reason at all for existing, and you know you

have been very wicked. Mrs. Umney told us, the first day we arrived here, that you had killed your wife."

"Well, I quite admit it," said the ghost petulantly, "but it was a purely family matter, and concerned no one else."

"It is very wrong to kill any one," said Virginia, who at times had a sweet Puritan gravity, caught from some old New-England ancestor.

"Oh, I hate the cheap severity of abstract ethics. My wife was very plain, never had my ruffs properly starched, and knew nothing about cookery. Why, there was a buck I had shot in Hogley Woods, a magnificent pricket, and do you know how she had it sent up to table? However, it is no matter now, for it is all over, and I don't think it was very nice of her brothers to starve me to death, though I did kill her."

"Starve you to death? Oh, Mr. Ghost, I mean Sir Simon, are you hungry? I have a sandwich in my case. Would you like it?"

"No, thank you. I never eat anything now; but it is very kind of you, all the same, and you are much nicer than the rest of your horrid, rude, vulgar, dishonest family."

"Stop!" cried Virginia, stamping her foot, "it is you who are rude, and horrid, and vulgar, and as for dishonesty, you know you stole the paints out of my box to try and furbish up that ridiculous blood-stain in the library. First you took all my reds, including the vermilion, and I couldn't do any more sunsets; then you took the emerald green and the chrome yellow; and finally I had nothing left but indigo and Chinese white, and could only do moonlight scenes, which are always depressing to look at, and not at all easy to paint. I never told on you, though I was very much annoyed, and it was most ridiculous, the whole thing; for who ever heard of emerald-green blood?"

"Well, really," said the ghost, rather meekly, "what was I to do? It is a very difficult thing to get real blood nowadays, and, as your brother began it all with his Paragon Detergent, I certainly saw no reason why I

should not have your paints. As for color, that is always a matter of taste; the Cantervilles have blue blood, for instances, the very bluest in England; but I know you Americans don't care for things of this kind."

"You know nothing about it, and the best thing you can do is to emigrate and improve your mind. Once in New-York, you are sure to be a great success. I know lots of people there who would give a hundred thousand dollars to have a grandfather, and much more than that to have a family ghost."

"I don't think I would like America."

"I suppose because we have no ruins and no curiosities," said Virginia satirically.

"No ruins! no curiosities!" answered the ghost; "you have your navy and your manners."

"Good evening; I will go and ask papa to get the twins an extra week's holiday."

"Please don't go, Miss Virginia," he cried; "I am so lonely and so unhappy, and I really don't know what to do. I want to go to sleep, and I cannot."

"That's quite absurd! You have merely to go to bed and blow out the candle. It is very difficult sometimes to keep awake, especially at church, but there is no difficulty at all about sleeping. Why, even babies know how to do that, and they are not very clever."

"I have not slept for three hundred years," he said sadly, and Virginia's beautiful blue eyes opened in wonder; "for three hundred years I have not slept, and I am so tired."

Virginia trembled, a cold shudder ran through her, and for a few moments there was silence. She felt as if she were in a terrible dream.

Then the ghost spoke again, and his voice sounded like the sighing of the wind.

"Have you ever read the old prophecy on the library window?"

"Oh, often," cried the little girl, looking up; "I know it quite well. It is painted in curious black letters, and is difficult to read. There are only six lines:

When a golden girl can win
Prayer from out the lips of sin,
When the barren almond bears,
And a little child gives away its tears,
Then shall all the house be still
And peace come to Canterville.

But I don't know what they mean."

"They mean," he said sadly, "that you must weep with me for my sins, because I have no tears, and pray with me for my soul, because I have no faith, and then, if you have always been sweet, and good, and gentle, the Angel of Death will have mercy on me. You will see fearful shapes in darkness, and wicked voices will whisper in your ear, but they will not harm you, for against the purity of a little child the powers of Hell cannot prevail."

Virginia made no answer, and the ghost wrung his hands in wild despair as he looked down at her bowed golden head. Suddenly she stood up, very pale, and with a strange light in her eyes. "I am not afraid," she said firmly, "and I will ask the angel to have pity on you."

He rose from his seat with a faint cry of joy, and, taking her hand, bent over it with old-fashioned grace and kissed it. His fingers were as cold as ice, and his lips burned like fire, but Virginia did not falter, and he led her across the dusky room. When they reached the end of the room, he stopped, and muttered some words she could not understand. She opened her eyes, and saw the wall slowly fading away like a mist, and a great, black cavern in front of her. A bitter, cold wind swept round them, and she felt something pulling at her dress. "Quick, quick," cried the ghost, "or it will be too late," and in a moment the wainscoting had closed behind them, and the Tapestry Chamber was empty.

About ten minutes after this, the bell rang for tea, and, as Virginia did not come down, Mrs. Otis sent up one of the footmen to tell her. After a little time he returned, and said that he could not find Miss Virginia

anywhere. As she was in the habit of going out to the garden every evening to get flowers for the dinner-table, Mrs. Otis was not at all alarmed at first, but when six o'clock struck and Virginia did not appear, she became really agitated and sent the boys out to look for her, while she herself and Mr. Otis searched every room in the house. At half-past six the boys came back and said that they could find no trace of their sister anywhere. They were all now in the greatest state of excitement and did not know what to do, when Mr. Otis suddenly remembered that, some few days before, he had given a band of gypsies permission to camp in the park. He accordingly at once set off for Blackfell Hollow, where he knew they were, accompanied by his eldest son and two of the farm-servants.

After riding all over the common, they turned their horses' heads homeward, and reached the Chase about eleven o'clock, dead-tired and almost heart-broken. They found Washington and the twins waiting for them at the gatehouse with lanterns, as the avenue was very dark. Not the slightest trace of Virginia had been discovered. It was evident that, for that night at any rate, she was lost to them; and it was in a state of the deepest depression that Mr. Otis and the boys walked up to the house, the groom following behind with the two horses and the pony. In the hall they found a group of frightened servants, and lying on a sofa in the library was poor Mrs. Otis, almost out of her mind with terror and anxiety, and having her forehead bathed with eau-de-cologne by the old housekeeper. Mr. Otis at once insisted on her having something to eat, and ordered up supper for the whole party. It was a melancholy meal, as hardly any one spoke, and even the twins were awestruck and subdued, as they were very fond of their sister. Just as they were passing out of the dining-room, midnight began to boom from the clock-tower, and when the last stroke sounded, they heard a crash and a sudden shrill cry; a dreadful peal of thunder shook the house, a strain of unearthly music floated through the air, a panel at the top of the stair-

case flew back with a loud noise, and Virginia stepped out on the landing, looking very pale and white, with a little casket in her hand. In a moment they had all rushed up to her. Mrs. Otis clasped her passionately in her arms, the duke smothered her with violent kisses, and the twins executed a wild war-dance round the group.

"Good heavens, child, where have you been?" said Mr. Otis, rather angrily, thinking that she had been playing some foolish trick on them. "Cecil and I have been riding all over the country looking for you, and your mother has been frightened to death. You must never play these practical jokes any more."

"Except on the ghost! except on the ghost!" shrieked the twins, as they capered about.

"My own darling, thank God you are found; you must never leave my side again," murmured Mrs. Otis, as she kissed the trembling child and smoothed the tangled gold of her hair.

"Papa," said Virginia quietly, "I have been with the ghost. He is dead, and you must come and see him. He had been very wicked, but he was really sorry for all that he had done, and he gave me this box of beautiful jewels before he died."

The whole family gazed at her in mute amazement, but she was quite grave and serious; and, turning round, she led them through the opening in the wainscoting down a narrow secret corridor, Washington following with a lighted candle, which he had caught up from the table. Finally, they came to a great oak door, studded with rusty nails. When Virginia touched it, it swung back on its heavy hinges, and they found themselves in a little low room, with a vaulted ceiling, and one tiny grated window. Imbedded in the wall was a huge iron ring, and chained to it was a gaunt skeleton, that was stretched out at full length on the stone floor, and seemed to be trying to grasp with its long fleshless fingers an old-fashioned trencher and ewer, that were placed just out of its reach. The jug had evidently been once filled with water, as it was

covered inside with green mould. There was nothing on the trencher but a pile of dust. Virginia knelt down beside the skeleton, and, folding her little hands together, began to pray silently, while the rest of the party looked on in wonder at the terrible tragedy whose secret was now disclosed to them.

"Hallo!" cried suddenly one of the twins, who had been looking out of the window to try and discover in what wing of the house the room was situated. "Hallo! the old withered almond tree has blossomed. I can see the flowers quite plainly in the moonlight."

"God has forgiven him," said Virginia gravely, as she rose to her feet, and a beautiful light seemed to illumine her face.

"What an angel you are!" cried the young duke, and he put his arm round her neck, and kissed her.

IV.

When, in the spring of 1885, the young duchess of Cheshire was presented at the Queen's first drawing-room, on the occasion of her marriage, her jewels were the universal theme of admiration. For Virginia received the coronet which is the reward of all good little American girls, and was married to her boy-lover as soon as he came of age. They were both so handsome, and they loved each other so much, that every one was delighted at the match, except the old marchioness of Dumbleton, who had tried to catch the duke for one of her seven unmarried daughters, and had given no less than three dinner-parties for that purpose, and, strange to say, Mr. Otis himself. Mr. Otis was extremely fond of the young duke personally, but, theoretically, he objected to titles, and, to use his own words, "was not without apprehension lest, amid the enervating influences of a pleasure-loving aristocracy, the true principles of republican simplicity should be forgotten." His objections, however, were completely overruled, and I believe that when he walked up the aisle of St. George's, Hanover Square, with his daughter leaning on his arm, there was not a prouder man in England.

This wild and sad, though beautiful, story of the Calabrian Mountains has been translated from the Italian of Nicola Misasi by John Nitchie.

BROTHER THOMAS, THE HERMIT.

THERE he sat alone by the fire, which threw up leaping, playful flames. A single lamp upon a shelf above the hearth feebly contested with the glowing firelight the right to illuminate the smoke-begrimed room. A disordered bed, under it a broken chest, a table upon which were a couple of plates and an oil jug, and a torn willow basket hanging from the roof, constituted the furniture of the bare hut, with the exception of a few stools by the fireplace and a box used as a bench. The walls were blackened by smoke, and spider-webs hung from the dust-laden beams of the roof. In the wall to the right was a door that looked through into a little chapel, a poor little chapel with a wooden altar, hung with tattered white cloth, whereon were two gilded wooden candlesticks and a black, worm-eaten picture of the Madonna. Above this was a crucifix, and before the crucifix a lamp that fluttered, as if about to go out.

He was there alone, crowded down in a corner of the hearth; he stretched his fleshless hands toward the leaping flames. His long, shabby woolen robe was thrown open, and disclosed his gaunt knees and the breast covered with white hair, where every rib was plainly discernible. The head sank forward upon his breast; the face was bronze-colored, with hollow, deep shaded eyes; over all fell his thick, woolly gray hair.

Without, it snowed. Often the wind whistled through the firs, and shook the door of the hut, or howled down the chimney. Then the hermit crouched more closely in the corner of the fireplace.

For twenty years he had lived in these lonely mountains. In summer he was seen about the country, with his pilgrim staff in his hand and a sack on his shoulders, silent, meditative, dragging himself along. Wherever

he came, the children ran to meet him with joy. He loved the children. When the peasants filled his sack, he said "Thank you," and went on. But often he stopped to fondle the children, though he never talked with the women or the maidens.

In winter they saw him no more. He stayed up on the mountain in the snow alone. Many a wanderer, overcome on the heights by the storm, knew that he would be welcomed and cared for in that poor hut. The hermit gave up his bed, and passed the night by the fire; that is why he was so loved by the peasants.

* * * * * * * * *

But what was the man cowering there by the fire thinking of, that stormy December night, with his hands stretched out over the flames, while without the snow came in gusts and the wind howled through the fir trees?

He was thinking of that lovely maiden, whom he had met in the street in those happy days; he had followed her even into the church; and he saw her again, and she had caught his glance, she had smiled. He loved, oh! how he loved her! What dreams came; by day he would work for her, and at night she would watch for him, with her baby in her arms.

But one day another followed her, a bold, handsome fellow; he made love to her, and she—listened to him. God! what pain, what madness filled his heart! The two met; he threw himself upon his rival, he wounded him. Then the relatives of the wounded man collected; his own father and friends came too; a terrible fight ensued, and his father was killed. Then he had to escape, closely pursued, to the mountains. There after a time he learned that his old grandmother had died of grief, and that his widowed mother had found a home with her relatives. The officers of the law were on his track. So he wandered about the mountains till he came to this hut. He begged the aged brother for shelter, and when the holy man died, he had inherited his sack and hut.

This is what the old man thought of as he crouched by the fire, with his hands stretched out over the flames,

while, without, the snow fell fast and the wind roared in the tops of the fir trees.

* * * * * * * * *

There was a knock at the door.

"Come in," called the monk.

On the threshold stood a man wrapped in a mantle, behind him a woman. In the little clearing before the hut were two horses, with drooping heads and white with clinging snow.

"Give us shelter, brother," said the man. "The storm has overtaken us. Give us shelter for the night."

Brother Thomas arose. The traveller had taken off his cloak and spread it over one of the foot-stools; then he helped his wife to take off her damp wraps. He was a man of fifty, large, thick-set, with a full, satisfied expression of countenance; she was small, delicate, but well-formed, and, although about forty, still beautiful.

"Sit down," said Brother Thomas, "I will look after the horses."

He went out. The man and his wife sat down on the box and warmed their numbed fingers.

"We should have perished if we had not happened on this place," said the man.

Soon the hermit came back, carrying a bundle of dry wood, which he threw upon the fire. The flames seized upon them and roared up the chimney, flooding the bare hut with their red light.

"The horses have oats and straw and a secure place under the shed. I can offer you nothing but a little bread and bacon."

"No, brother," said the man; "we need nothing but the warm fire."

The hermit sat down again in his corner. He bowed himself over the fire. When he raised his head, his eyes met those of the woman. He started, then stared motionless at her. She sat with her elbows on her knees, her hands spread out before the fire, and looked about the room.

"Poor man," she said, "how lonely it must be for you here amid the snow."

He started again at the sound of her voice, but he did not answer; he drew down closer into his corner, stretched out his hands toward the flames, and let his head sink forward on his breast.

Outside the wind howled more fiercely in the fir trees.

The two travelers chatted comfortably before the warm fire. She had taken off her wet shoes and rested her little white-stockinged feet on the edge of the hearth. They had been married twenty years before. He was not rich, but the good God had blessed them, and their daily bread had never been wanting. This little woman here, still strong and beautiful—is she not?—had borne him four children, handsome, healthy creatures, who filled the house with happy laughter. One daughter had been married the previous year. How hard had been the parting between mother and daughter, and yet what could be done? They were now on the way to their daughter's house to spend Christmas. The other children were already there. What a happy holiday-time they would all have! Think of it, a grandmother at forty, and still beautiful, isn't she?

The hermit held his hands toward the fire, and his head sank upon his breast.

And they talked on together.

This year they are to have a beautiful representation of the birth of our Lord in the church. Do you remember that one, long ago, soon after that terrible trouble? What unhappy days those were! Think of it—and he turned to the hermit—another haunted her footsteps in those days. She had perhaps smiled upon him, but she loved him not. She had known him as a boy, you know, and felt toward him as toward a brother. He loved her, to be sure, but he was a wild fellow, a spendthrift, and no man for a husband. But he was jealous: see what he did when he learned that I was courting her. One day he met his rival in the square and threw himself fiercely upon him, and wounded him, the coward. The relatives on both sides collected, and in the fight the father of the wretch was killed. It was a great blow to the family; but so it goes, where there are scapegraces in

the house. One of the relatives, accused of murder, was put in prison; the wounded lingered between life and death; the grandmother died of grief and shame. But of the real cause of all this trouble nothing more was ever known. Perhaps he went to America; perhaps he died in prison, for there was no doubt a prison-cell awaiting such a wretch. Then the two married. The first year it went badly with them, but soon God smiled upon them. Children came, and business thrived. Now they were very happy. The children, so good and strong! You should see them, and what progress they made at school!

The hermit listened to their talk without a stir; his head was still bowed forward upon his breast, and his hands stretched out towards the fire. Without the wind roared in the tops of the trees. They talked on, and then at last it grew stiller in the little hut. The woman had fallen asleep, and her head rested on the arm of the bench.

"Do you wish to sleep? There is my bed," said the hermit almost in a whisper to his guest.

"But—you?"

"I shall remain here by the fire. You are tired, and have a long way before you in the morning."

"That is true; very well, I accept your kindness. Filomena," he called, lightly touching his wife's arm; "the good man has given up his bed to you."

The man helped his wife, still half-asleep, to the rude bed, and covered her up with the scanty blanket. Then he himself sat down on a stool at the foot of the couch, and, resting his head on a bundle of straw, soon fell asleep. The hermit in his corner heard the gentle breathing of the woman and the long, sonorous droning of the sleeping husband.

The flames on the hearth had died down, and only the little lamp dimly lighted the room.

He sat immovably and looked at the sleeping woman; he saw her white face with its rose-touched cheeks. The blankets, drawn back by the unconscious turning of the sleeper, disclosed a glimpse of her white neck

through the loosened bodice. The light of the lamp grew lower and lower, flared tremblingly up once or twice, and then died away; the glowing coals on the hearth spread through the silent room a dull red light, in which could be seen the form of the hermit cowering in the chimney-corner.

At last day began to break. A faint light crept in at the small window over the door. The hermit still sat by the hearth; his hands hung down over his knees listlessly; the coals were covered with a coating of ashes.

The man awoke first; he sprang up and called to his wife:

"Filomena, Filomena, get up; it is late; think, they are waiting for us."

She stretched her arms, yawned and clambered out of bed. Her clothes were somewhat disordered, her hair disarranged, and her eyes still half veiled with sleep; yet she was beautiful. Then her husband said:

"I will go and saddle the horses."

He went out. The woman approached the hermit and touched his arm.

"What do you wish?" he asked in a low voice.

Their eyes met; she looked deep into his, as if seeking to awaken some far-off recollection, then she took a gold-piece from her purse and handed it to him.

"We are not rich," she said, "but we can give to those who are in need."

"Keep thy money," said the hermit, and rudely pushed her hand away. Then he stood up; the peaceful, deep eyes glowed as with living fire; he crossed his arms on his breast, and looked fixedly at the woman, who gazed at him in wonder. He opened his mouth to speak, but with difficulty restrained himself. His knees trembled and bowed themselves, the light in his eyes died away. He sank into his former seat, and bowed his head on his breast.

Then the man came back; he exchanged a look with his wife.

"He would not take it," she said in a low voice.

The man turned to the hermit.

"Why did you not accept the offering? We did not intend to wound your pride."

"No, I need nothing; my house is open to all."

"You will at least," said the woman in a pleading voice, "take this silver medal which the bishop has blessed. It will make you remember us in your prayers."

She gave him a medal, which she took from her neck. He received it in silence and without lifting his eyes.

"Good-by," said the man; "we are grateful to you."

"Good-by," replied his wife.

They went toward the door, and were already outside, when they heard the voice of the hermit calling them back. They entered the hut again.

"I would like to give you a remembrance also," said the hermit, who had risen from his seat by the hearth. He went to the chest, raised the lid, rummaged about among its contents, and finally brought out a little bundle. He unwrapped it and disclosed a little red coral heart, such as the children of well-to-do villagers wear at the neck. He held it out to the woman and said:

"It belonged to a maiden—who is now dead. Give it to your daughter, it will bring her happiness."

The woman looked at the red heart and then at the hermit, and it seemed as if she were trying to grasp some far-off fleeting memory.

"Who gave you this heart?" she asked.

Brother Thomas smiled.

"A maiden, who is dead, I have told you."

"And now good-by," said the man.

They went out. The hermit stood leaning against the door and watched them mount their horses. They rode away. The woman turned several times to look back at him; but she made no sign, and she did not smile. Her face was sad and pale. Ah! she remembered now.

The hermit followed them with his eyes. When they disappeared around a bend of the road, he went back into the cabin. He sat down in the corner by the hearth, and buried his face in his gaunt, wasted hands.

Without, the wind moaned in the fir trees and the snow fell in thick, driving gusts.

Among the most interesting stories are those which deal with the loss and recovery of cherished jewels. The following excellent example of this class of literature has been written for ROMANCE by Ada Blakeley Whittaker.

THE GRAVEYARD OF THE ATLANTIC.

AMONG my earlier recollections as a child is an old ring my mother wore. It was a narrow gold band, set with two turquoise hearts, each surrounded by small diamonds. When, standing by her knee, I learned to count the eighteen diamonds, I considered myself well up in mathematics. The ring was one of my mother's love-tokens, and great was her grief when one day it could not be found, for she prized it highly. This catastrophe occurred when I was about twelve years old. The coachman left rather suddenly and without much cause, about the same time the ring was missed, and we naturally charged him with the theft. However, as there was no especial evidence against him, the matter was dropped, though my mother never ceased to mourn the loss of the ring.

We afterward heard that our erstwhile coachman had taken passage on the ill-fated ship "Atlantic," and we supposed that he perished with the other six hundred souls on board. That was many, many years ago, and the affair of the old ring with its little blue hearts and tiny diamonds became almost forgotten. Last autumn on the passage westward across the Atlantic, the captain pointed out to me Sable Island, and told me that the lighthouse-keeper there and his family were the only inhabitants of the island, and that they never see a human being except when the Canadian supply-ship visits them, twice a year. He told me of the wild horses or ponies that roam by the hundred over the sandy island, and of the long, narrow lake in its centre. Then, with lowered voice and almost tender manner, the old captain stretched out his sunbrowned hand

toward the sea, and said: "This is the Graveyard of the Atlantic. Many good ships have gone down here; this is where the 'Atlantic' perished, with six hundred souls on board."

Then, with a suspicion of tears in his kindly blue eyes, he left me, and as I looked across the waters to that distant light-house and thought of its lonely keeper, I sighed for some yet unknown mental telegraphy by which I might send him some small greeting. Perchance he sighted our ship and thought of us as we were thinking of him. Then I thought of the "Atlantic" and her death-voyage here, and I wondered if beneath these waves, in some rocky crevice or buried in the sand, my mother's old ring might be lying. I looked down at the water. It was as clear as crystal. I could see the bottom!

Great rocks, covered with green moss, which waved in the water like fields of grain in a summer breeze; huge fish and dark slimy creatures darted about, their eyes gleaming like hot coals; here and there were pieces of broken timber, covered like the rocks with the slime of years; and lying near was a human skeleton. The waves rocked it to and fro—a ghastly sight. Slowly it arose and came toward me; as I watched it, terror-stricken, it held out its bony hand, and on the little finger was my mother's old ring, the diamonds shedding a blue-green light through the water. Nearer and nearer to me came the skeleton hand; I was paralyzed with fear; then it clutched me by the shoulder, and I screamed out in my fright, and—awoke! Yes, I had been dreaming; it was eleven A.M., and by the side of my steamer-chair stood the deck-steward with a cup of beef tea. He had touched me on the shoulder to awaken me. I smiled as I thought of the dream, but the smile quickly changed to a look of wonder, for, as he handed me the cup, I saw on his little finger—my mother's ring! Then I knew not whether I had been to the bottom of the sea or whether I had dreamed, and if I dreamed, was it with eyes open, gazing at the ring?

I recovered the ring. The steward was our old

coachman. He had intended selling the ring and buying a passage on the ship "Atlantic" with the proceeds, but he failed to make the sale. When the "Atlantic" perished, he considered the ring a lucky one and had always worn it.

He was quite willing to give it up on the condition that I would say nothing to the steamship people about the theft.

As I write, the ring is on my finger, and the little diamonds around the turquoise hearts shed forth the same blue-green light that I saw in the Graveyard of the Atlantic.

In the wall of the shabby convent-church known as the Campanile of the Gancia, in Palermo, is a small, irregular marble tablet, on which is written this inscription, "Buca della Salvezza," meaning "The hole of salvation." A longer inscription above states that through this opening (for opening it was, before the tablet covered it, although so small that one wonders how a human body could pass through) escaped two men, Gaspare Bivona and Filippo Patti; thus saving their lives, and at the same time achieving one of the boldest deeds of the revolution of 1860. The story of this wonderful feat was related in the New York *Tribune* of March 25, 1888, from which we copy it. There is nothing quite so thrilling, after all, as something which really happened.

THE HOLE OF SALVATION.

FRANCESCO RISO, a fontaniere of Palermo, with eighty-eight other citizens, began the rebellion of 1860. On the evening of April 3 they concealed themselves in the Gancia, intending to sally forth at dawn, and take possession of the public buildings—the Zecca and Finanze—in that quarter. At the same time, acting in concert, their friends without were to rise, and carry other important points in the town. The bell of the Gancia was to be the signal, the tricolor their badge, and their watchword, "Viva l'Italia e la Liberta!"

It was a well-laid plan, and should have succeeded. But while the patriots were in hiding, a traitor had gone to Maniscalco, the Director of Police, and revealed the entire plot — time, signal, names — everything. Speedily troops filled the Piazza Marina, cannon were placed fronting the Gancia, guards were stationed at the rear; and so far as the eighty-nine popolani were concerned, the revolution was over before it had begun. In the face of their certain doom, however, they fought like heroes; and, entrenched in the Gancia, maintained themselves almost two hours. Then, many being killed, and Riso himself mortally wounded, the survivors sought such safety as they could. The majority,

against the advice of Gaspare Bivona, who was next in authority to Riso, took refuge among the rafters, between the ceiling and roof of the church, where they were soon found. Some sprang down among the soldiers and tried to cut their way through; many were killed, hardly one escaped. Those who surrendered were taken to Porta San Giorgio, a few days later, and fusilladed; among them, the old Giovanni, father of Francesco Riso. The latter, mortally wounded, was removed to the hospital, and died there, from his injuries.

Meanwhile, Filippo Patti had joined his fate to Bivona's, and their escape is in great part due to the latter's astuteness and steady nerve. First of all, they fled to the Campanile, but seeing that the convent was surrounded and safe descent would soon be impossible, they clambered down to the roof. There, looking through a skylight, they perceived two of the brethren, on their knees, below, praying. Their rap upon the glass instantly directed toward them two frightened faces, but for some time they could get no answer to their signs, the priests evidently fearing that they were spies. At last, however, they were told, by signs, of course, that if the window were open, it was possible to climb down, by means of the cornice and woodwork. With a blow of his fist, Bivona broke the glass. The blood spurted out from a severed vein in his wrist, but twisting a handkerchief about it like a vice, he tied the knot with one hand and his teeth, and then managed to swing himself down, followed by Patti.

By the time they were down, the monks had vanished, but were found in one of the side chapels, praying to all the saints for safety. The fugitives made it clear they were not spies, although to be friends—in this crisis—was almost as fatal. But they were brothers in misery, and there was no longer any fear of betrayal. From the body of the church they fled to a small room at the opposite end from the high altar, full of chairs, which were stored here when not in use. A lane was hastily opened in the mass, and they crawled in, twisting themselves here, there, anyhow, so as to be out of

sight, and as far from the front as possible. Then the monks replaced the wooden files above and in front of them, shut the door and went back to their praying.

It was well they had made haste, for in less than half an hour the soldiers entered. Little of the Gancia escaped search; even among these chairs they plunged and pried with their bayonets, but luckily hit no one, and after several trials went away.

In this cramped and painful confinement, the fugitives remained until the third day. At the close of the second, the Gancia, now supposed to be empty, was locked up, although still strictly guarded without. Half dead from hunger, thirst and cramp, but somewhat reassured by the silence, this small remnant of Francesco Riso's troop emerged from its concealment, and entered the church. The first thing the men saw was the holy water font—as good luck would have it, half full; and they drained it, to the last drop. "Never was water more truly blessed," said Bivona; "Aqua benedetta, sicuro!"

Now, in their long hiding among the chairs, he had been considering what better refuge there might be, and had remembered a vault below the church, next the street, which opened by a trap-door into a room used as a vestry. Here the conventual dead were laid away, each on his shelf, but otherwise uncoffined; and the probabilities were that no one would seek the living in such companionship. So the semi-dead pried up the ponderous, iron-shod door, and entrusted themselves to those who were dead.

Just below the ceiling of the vault were several small, heavily-barred windows; and as the sound of life and the fresh spring air came pouring in, the captives were roused to new exertions. They must die of hunger if they stayed; they could no more than die, if discovered, and they decided to take their chances. They were feeble; still they managed to pile the good brothers of the Gancia, one above another, until from this standpoint of mortality they could reach a window.

The first who looked out promptly dodged; sentinels

were pacing up and down, before the building; and at the corner, where two streets crossed, was stationed a large guard. But, watching their chance as the sentinels passed, they made signs to a woman in an opposite café. They were seen, they were understood, and all were eager to help. Their first, most pressing need was food, and this was conveyed to them most adroitly by a cab-driver, brother to Patti.

As though by chance, he stopped his cab close to the window; again as by chance, several people stopped in front of the cab, talking busily together; and thus screened, he thrust in at the grating a roll of bread and a short, pointed iron bar. When they had a hole, he hurriedly told them, they must signal; then the people would get up a quarrel, to call off the guards, and favor the escape.

Patti was overcome at first with weakness and despondency, and wept bitterly. As to Bivona, the greater the peril, the wirier, more tensely strung he became. He cheered up his companion, and, strengthened by the bread, they set to work, aiding the slow chisel with their hands, until, on the fifth day of their imprisonment, the outermost stone lay loose in its socket. They rested a few seconds, then signalled that they were ready.

The street had been quite peaceful until now; but suddenly two women began to quarrel, their friends joined in, and a great hubbub arose. An officer passing by stopped a moment close to the window, and Bivona heard him say to a friend: "If there was a conspiracy, you may be sure these accursed women would be in it, they are always ready for a row." On he passed, little dreaming that conspiracy was actually there; and Bivona, despite the peril, could not restrain a chuckle.

In almost the same moment, at the crossing where the guard was stationed, several carts, loaded with straw, managed to run into each other. The wildest confusion ensued. The drivers cursed, threatened, came to blows; the bystanders rushed in, and, sympathetically, began to fight; those "accursed women"

joined the fray, screaming loudest of all; in fact, as Bivona said, they had "a devil of a time." Guard and sentinel gathered in haste to separate the combatants and clear the streets; such a throng was not safe, it might lead to insurrection; and while the friends of order were thus laudably engaged at one end of the Gancia, at the other appeared, feet foremost, Filippo Patti! Half-way out of the hole, he stuck, and urged Bivona to help him back. "No," said the latter, "return is death to both of us; out you must go, even if in pieces."

With all his might he pushed him, while those without pulled; and in this manner, although badly scarified, Patti reached at last the street.

Then came Bivona, who, being of slender build, and going head first, emerged safely. The women covered them, as they appeared, with their clothes, hustled them behind and through the crowd, across the street, and from one friendly house to another, until they could reach the open country.

So adroitly was the affair managed that the soldiers had not even a suspicion. No sooner, however, were the fugitives safe, than—to quote a Palermitan writer —"there ceased, as if by magic, the confusion of the carts." The drivers recovered their temper as unexpectedly as they had lost it; the bystanders grew amicable and jolly; the horses trotted on; the sentries resumed their marçh. All as was before, with one exception. In the stone wall of the Gancia—like an eye looking out from its vaults—was a small, irregular opening.

How had it come there? Strange to say, no one knew anything about it! The people gathered around, as astonished as the sentinels. "Most holy Virgin! what could they know about it? They had been watching the straw-carts. A piece must have fallen out of the wall while they were not looking! Diavolo! Dio Santissimo!" (thus invoking the two strongest authorities). "Nobody had seen anything!"

The most rigid cross-questioning and search failed to

elicit more than this. There had been an escape; so much was certain; and since Bivona and Patti had not been found before, it was argued, rightly, that they were the fugitives. Bivona's wife and children were treated with much harshness; but as the poor woman said, "We only knew that he was gone; we could only pray that he was safe."

So matters went, until on the 11th of May, not quite a month from that sad struggle in the Gancia, there landed at Marsala, Garibaldi and his Thousand. On the 16th they were at Calatifimi, the 17th at Aleamo, the 18th at Partinico. By the 25th they had reached Misilmeri, the 26th, Gibilrossa; and the 27th saw their triumphant entry into Palermo. Before November of this year, the campaign was ended; Italy was free!

And Bivona? He had joined Garibaldi, of course; and fought with him bravely, as you may suppose. But after a while, some chronic ailment disabled him for active service, and he was voted a small pension. Small as it was, it soon ceased to be paid; and for the last ten years he struggled hard with illness, poverty and the care of a large family. This, says Signor Salvo, is the way one's country pays its debts!

Yet something may be urged for poor, debt-oppressed Italy. She "pays thus," often, because she is unable to do otherwise. And, in spite of his barren pension, Bivona can still say, with all the fire of patriotism that first led him to rebel, "Viva Italia! Viva la Liberta!"

This pathetic, yet emphatically cheerful, story of humble life is from the skillful and versatile pen of Mary C. Hungerford, and first appeared in *Harper's Bazar*.

RED ROSES ON A GREEN GROUND.

THE old missionary known familiarly as "Priest Packard" lived in a rough border community, where religion was so highly disapproved of by the leading spirits that to profess it was to become in most instances a target for abuse. He was a giant in size and strength, and his prowess and bravery had won admiration for himself, and, as a personal compliment, some slighting toleration for the doctrine he taught in his earnest, unlettered fashion.

His great age left his muscular Christianity simply a matter of tradition, and now he and his daughters were kept from starving chiefly by a yearly pittance sent them from a humane society in the East.

Within a large, cheerless room, which was the principal one in the barn-like house they occupied, sat the pair of elderly women, inaptly called by their father "the girls." Idle moments were rare with them, but some engrossing matter had made one turn from the dandelion greens she was washing, and impelled the other to drop the shoe to which she was attaching a clumsy patch.

"It seems a p'int of duty for us to write to brother Nathan's child," Lucinda, the elder sister, was saying.

"There 'ain't been ink enough in the house to drown a fly, sense father took the shaking palsy," was Minerva's answer; "an' ef there was, neither one of us could write a letter fit to go into a public post-office."

"I don't see," said the other sister fretfully, "what answer we could give, anyway."

"Well, settlin' on the answer don't b'long to us; it's for father to say," said Minerva, nodding her head side-

wise toward a wooden rocking-chair where "Priest Packard" sat, with a pillow at his shoulders, a pathetic figure, with his long, attenuated frame and poor, worn-out clothes, which, in immaculate cleanness and profuse decoration of darns and patches, testified to his daughters' care. The soft June wind, coming in flower-scented from a window beside him, waved the white locks lying on his thin temples. One shaking hand lay helpless on the arm-chair; the other held loose grasp of a remotely dated religious weekly. His blue eyes, clear and bright, in spite of their crape-like setting of wrinkles, were absently turned to the cloudless sky. His ears, only open to loud sounds, were closed to the women's low talk, and he was saying softly to himself, again and again, the line, "Must I be kerried to the skies on flowery beds of ease?"

"No, no," he ejaculated at last, in louder tones, turning toward the "girls." "'Tain't fittin' fur a private like me to hanker fur better things than th great Cap'n hed when He was on airth."

"What is it now, father?"

"Oh, the same old story. When I'd oughter be praisin' God fur His goodness, my mind wanders off to that carpet."

"Lor, father, can't you quit yearnin' fur a carpet?"

"Yes," contritely. "A body would think that arter livin' twenty year on stomped airth floors, an' then gettin' so fine as to hev reg'lar-built plankin' floor fur twenty year, I might furget ther' ever wuz a carpet."

"I'm sure I've forgot ever seein' any that b'longed to any o' my folks," said Minerva.

"You was too little ter take notice, but we always hed 'em 'fore we moved out this way. I often think of what yer ma gev up to merry a poor circuit preacher. En when the call come for missioners to carry on the work here, when 'twuz wuss even than 'tis now, 'cause our lives warn't scursely safe, she jes rose an' obeyed the call, en lef' her father's comfortable farm-house in Vermont, where we'd gone on livin' arter we wuz merried, en where you en your brother was born. Every

floor in that house was carpeted, an' the best parlor, where we was merried, had one on it thet wuz jes alive with big red roses as large round as a bar'l head, an' a ground greener'n grass. No, your ma never spent her time complainin', but I guess she re'ly broke her heart in a dumb kine er way over her oldest, our only boy, that we left with his gran'ma."

"An' she never seen him again," said Lucinda, leading up to some news she wished to impart.

"No," shaking his head sadly; "we never see our first-born again, though he lived to be a man growed up and merried, 'fore he wuz swep' away to jine his mother."

"Brother Nathan left a widder en child, you know," pursued his daughter, getting nearer the subject.

"Yes; we got the news in a letter. Poor Nathan he——"

"Well, pa, there's another letter come, an' there's more news; the widder's dead!"

The old man looked surprised; hardly grief-stricken, for he had never seen his son's wife. "All gone," he said softly, "them strong young folks, an' I'm left cum'brin' the ground."

"They ain't all gone," said Minerva; "there's a child left."

"Nathan's boy!" exclaimed her father joyfully. "But who's to look after him now?"

"'Tain't a boy; it's a girl; and there's been some mismanagement of the property, an' she's left without a cent, an' she wants to come here to us. The doctor that tended her mother, free of charge, is goin' to pay her way ef we'll take her."

"Of course we'll take her, an' be glad," said her father. "But she'll find it kine er roughish here. I wisht we could 'a' made out to get a carpet 'fore she come."

"I don't see how we're goin' to take care of her, anyway," said Minerva sorrowfully. "There's times when it seems like we'd starve ourselves, en I don't know how we're goin' to fill another mouth. Even with the

Christmas bar'l comin' every year from that church in the East, we hev a turrible squeeez gettin' along with the 'lowance from the 'Superannuated Ministers' Fund.' Ef 'twarn't fer Cindy's garden, we'd die in our tracks."

"But we couldn't refuse to take the child in—our own flesh an' blood," said her father pleadingly.

They could not indeed refuse, poor though they were, the women agreed, and four weeks later Hetty Packard knocked at her grandfather's door, after the long journey which the novelty of travelling had made very enjoyable.

Her welcome from the old man was touchingly tender, but the aunts were too greatly appalled to be decently cordial at first. They had half expected a child, but here was a tall, beautiful young woman, whose cheap but stylish dress and hat seemed to their untrained eyes like royal apparel, in contrast with the indigo prints, coarse faded blanket shawls, and dreary slat sun-bonnets that composed their own open-air costumes.

It was truly a rough home for Hetty, used as she had been to the comfortable civilization of New England country life, but she took her lot heroically, and after a day or two of very natural depression, which she managed to keep to herself, she fitted herself into her place as if she had always lived there. She had the charming faculty of drawing out the best of every one, and soon the shy aunts were won to a worshipful admiration of her, that formed the excitement of their colorless lives. The old grandfather awoke to a new interest in life, and the two were soon as devoted friends as if a gulf of threescore years had not stretched between them.

The enchantment of her presence extended even to the bleak old house. Wild vines were planted at its door, and home-made brackets and shelves, a shade for the hideous lamp, and other simple devices for tempering its dreariness crept in and softened the asperities of the big, barren "living-room." In Hetty's zeal for improvement she had broached the question of paper-

ing the unplastered walls, but her proposal was met by a frank statement of their meagre resources from her aunts, which filled her with dismay.

"You never should have let me come," she cried, "to add to your burdens; but now I am here, I must work for you, and not let it cost you anything to keep me. I can sew nicely, and I am sure I can earn a good deal at that. Perhaps I can even earn enough to make you more comfortable than before I came."

It was hard to make her realize that their far-apart neighbors were either too poor or too indifferent to appearance to hire sewing done.

"But, at any rate, somebody shall give me work," said the pretty, determined creature, not cast down by this discouraging statement of facts. "If I cannot get it here, I will write to the Women's Exchange in some great city, and ask them to send me some embroidery to do. If no express comes so far into the wilderness, Uncle Sam will bring me the things in his mailbags."

She carried out her plan successfully, and many small comforts found their way into the straitened household as a result of her earnings.

But with all the brightness and cheer she brought into other lives, Hetty had her own secret sorrow, and one day Aunt Cin surprised her hiding away in the loft, with her lovely little face all downcast and tear-stained. The woe and sympathy in the good woman's troubled eyes won her to confidence, and with her flushed face turned resolutely away, she told her story. There had been a fair and lawn party at their church in Vermont last September, where she was one of the attendants at the flower-temple. A party of summer boarders had driven over from the Springs, twenty miles away, and one of them had devoted himself to Hetty so assiduously that Mrs. Bliss, the doctor's wife, and first directress of the sewing society, and the possessor of certain prejudices against city young men, was very angry. But it was not the devotion of a day only, for Allen Dunscombe took daily rides over to Hetty's home as long as his vacation lasted.

It was only to "break a country heart for pastime ere he went to town," Mrs. Bliss said, still unbelieving in his good intentions, and the injustice to her lover wounded Hetty so deeply that when on Allen's last day he won her promise to be his wife, she proudly kept their engagement a secret.

No word or sign had come from him during the long sad winter that followed that bright, glad autumn, and poor Hetty lived through the bitter misery of her mother's sickness and death, and the loneliness and poverty which followed, with the heavy underlying burden at her heart that Allen's silence gave.

"Now," she said, her eyes dry, and bright as stars, "you must stop crying, Aunt Cin. I can't keep up if you don't stop."

"But how could any man be false to a dear trusting baby like you?" sobbed Aunt Cin.

"Allen has not been false," said Hetty, impressively. "I think he must be dead, and some day I shall hear all about it. I should die if I could not believe in him. Now tell Aunt Min, if you like, but never, never speak to me about it again."

Nearly all of Hetty's embroidering was done by the side of her grandfather, and as he grew daily more childish, he prattled to her constantly of his old home, where he walked on carpeted floors.

"The Lord knows, child," he would say, "that I don't grudge Him the work I've done fur the cause, nor the hardship me an' your gran'ma went through with when we was houseless an' homeless, chased hether an' yon by roughs an' raiders; but I jes wisht I could be quit er hearin' folks stompin' on bare boards, en set my old feet on to a carpet wonst more."

Hetty sympathized with him, and saved, to the utmost, small sums from her scant earnings toward the purchase of a carpet; but every time the savings reached a slightly encouraging figure, some stringent need arose in the family, and she could not withhold her store.

Then winter came, and the old man, rapidly grow-

ing feeble, was quite shut in, and deprived of even the soft carpet of grass, which his shuffling feet preferred to the objectionable planks. In every other way he was a marvel of patience, but his lamentations over the want of a carpet nearly drove the women mad with pity.

"I was a-dreamin' of my own funeral, child," he said to Hetty, as he roused himself from a long nap. "I don't feel to hev much dread of it in general, but I seemed to hear the trompin' of the men's feet on the boards as they kerried me out, an' it hurt my very heart, Hetty, re'ly it did."

Hetty was desperate. "He *shall* have a carpet," she said, imperatively; and writing an account of the old man's fancy that was touching, from its simple truth, she begged for an advance sufficient to buy a cheap carpet, pledging herself to pay for it in work.

Then the women, not telling what had been attempted, for fear of disappointment, watched for a letter long before there was a possibility of getting an answer. At last the teamster, whose weekly trip to the far-away railroad station and post-office was the wide neighborhood's only communication with the outside world, brought Hetty a thick package, from which fell out a number of letters, all directed to herself in Vermont. The explanation was in a letter enclosed with them, from the man she had refused to believe false to her, and the unopened letters were his vindication.

On reaching home, after the autumn vacation when he met her, he had been dispatched, at an hour's notice, to Japan by the firm who employed him. It was a mission of great responsibility, an opportunity not to be refused, but the time allowed was all required to master the details, and there was not a moment for writing to Hetty. The first letter he had the opportunity of sending was so many months in reaching Vermont that Mrs. Bliss, who considered herself a model of worldly wisdom, decided that Hetty had better not hear from one who, she felt certain, meant no good. She took the responsibility of suppressing it, as well as

the many which followed, till at last they ceased to come.

On Allen's return from Japan he wrote immediately, hoping to obtain an explanation of his unanswered letters, and Mrs. Bliss, being somewhat pricked by her conscience, returned all the letters to the business address printed on the last, but refused to furnish him with Hetty's address.

"I should have found you some way, dear," he wrote, "but accident helped me. My cousin is one of the book-keepers at the 'Women's Exchange,' and to-night I found her crying over a letter that had been given her to answer. It was yours, Hetty, and I am not ashamed to tell you that I cried too—with joy that I had found you, and sorrow that you were in trouble. You can be sure that I started for a carpet store at once, but they were all shut up, so I flew home to write this to you.

"The poor old duffer (excuse me, I mean clergyman) shall have his carpet as fast as steam can carry it to him, and it shall be the style you want, if one with yard-wide roses on a bright green ground is still an article of commerce in these æsthetic days. And, my darling, I hope to get to you as soon as the carpet, for I will trust no more to letters. Another night shall find me speeding toward my little girl, who shall never escape me again, for if I cannot persuade you to leave that wild place, my pearl of pearls, my long-lost jewel that I am flying to claim, I shall give up the tempting prospect of a junior partnership in 'our firm,' and turn cow-boy and stay with you there."

The sick man's happiness was pathetic. He rejoiced in Hetty's innocent joy at having her lover's truth proved, but his enfeebled mind dwelt most on the prospect of having his dearest wish gratified.

The lover arrived before the carpet, which he assured them was speedily to follow. It would have accompanied him, but a little time was required to pack and ship it, and he was too impatient to wait.

The old man's eyes kindled with almost youthful fire when, replying to his eager questions, Allen described

the glories of the new carpet. He had grown too weak to sit up, but, as he piteously explained, "He'd feel more like getting about when he had a carpet to walk on. An' roses on to it, too," he whispered to Hetty, as she gave him a drink, "like them big posies, mebbe, thet me an' her stood upon to get merried. I wuz too shamefaced to look the minister in the eye 'fore all her folks, so I stared down at the big red roses, an' thought how glad I'd be ter give her posies to walk on all her days."

The sun was setting when the grinding of heavy wheels and the teamster's loud whoas to his horses, as they brought the loaded wagon to the door, broke the awed silence that the approach of death imposes upon even the most thoughtless.

The sounds wakened the old man, who had lain for hours in a half stupor. "It has come!" he exclaimed joyfully. "The carpet's come! I—I—am 'feared I ain't got strength to walk on it much, but anyhow 'twill be here for the funeral, an' there won't be no trompin' an' stompin' on bare boards."

They ran to the door to hurry the treasure in, and with eager hands cut the cord and tore the coarse wrappings from the roll, hastening to throw a length on the floor before the bed where the dying man lay with his face turned outward.

There it was, resplendent in the glories of its big, old-fashioned roses. But the spirit that had longed for it so fervently had taken its silent flight beyond the sun, to the golden city where the roses of paradise bloom fadeless forever.

Every child has heard of the good monks of St. Bernard and their benevolent work. Here is the history of the founding of that famous hospice. It is told by Salvator Muzzi, and has been translated for ROMANCE by Alma Lazzari.

THE GOOD PRIEST OF AOSTA.

In 960 A.D. a young man, about thirty years of age, was pacing up and down the stately rooms of a castle. Often he lifted his eyes to heaven, as if to pray for guidance; then, stopping suddenly, he seemed to have taken some resolution, only to resume again his restless walk and his deep meditation. He was the son of the Sire of Mentone, owner of this grand castle, which was situated not far from Annecy in Savoy. He had a fine mind and a wonderfully mild and religious heart. Having been in Paris, where religion and the study of theology were flourishing just then, he returned to the home of his ancestors with the intent to give his life up to works of piety, and to become a priest.

But his father had other views, and wanted him to live in splendor in his own castle. Accordingly, in conformity with the customs of those times, he decided that his son should wed the rich Margherita of Miolans. At this decision the young man became very sad, and without opening his heart completely, he showed a profound distaste for the marriage. But in vain. His father insisted that the whole hope of his happiness rested on him and on this marriage, and even sent away from the castle the son's old tutor, whom he suspected of influencing the young nobleman. After vain threats from the father, the mother added her entreaties, and these seemed to have conquered the son's mind. Meanwhile a sumptuous wedding-feast was ordered in the castle of Miolans. The Sire of Mentone and his wife and son repaired early thither. Already the great day had dawned; already the bride in full bridal array was prepared to step to the altar; already the two

fathers had united their hands in satisfaction over the union, so much desired by them; but the young man, who throughout a feverish, restless night had paced his apartment, upon hearing the noise of the approaching guests lifts his eyes in despair to heaven, and with a sudden resolution returns to his room, locks the door, and writes on a sheet of paper, which he leaves on the table. He then opens the window, and measures the height; going to a closet, takes a rope, which he fastens to the sill, and after having once more read the letter, kisses it, bends his knees in a mute prayer for a few seconds; then, rising, scales the window and flees.

Since the groom does not appear, after a little while his parents hurry to his chamber, but they knock and call in vain; the stillness is terrible, and soon the door is broken open, and they discover the letter.

"I beg my good father and merciful mother to permit me to follow the vocation of my heart. I leave you only to meet you again in heaven."

That is what the trembling father reads. A cry of desolation issues from his lips and is echoed by the entire company. A search throughout the whole place and through the neighboring castles and woods proves useless. No one had seen the fugitive.

After fifteen years of faithful service in the city of Aosta the archdeacon had died, and to his place came a priest, who had been raised to that position on account of his wisdom and goodness. Even the bishop consulted him, and soon he had opened schools throughout the whole valley. He went also to Novara, Genova, and Milan, preaching and making known the gospel by his pious example. The population, full of wonder at his eloquence and piety, came from far and near to hear him.

He had uprooted idolatry everywhere near his home, but there still remained a statue of an idol on a mountain, which bore the name of Jupiter. Thieves and murderers had made it their home, and attacked the travellers who had to pass it on their way from Italy to France, taking everything from them and often killing

them. The good priest of Aosta decided to redeem the mountaineers from idolatry, and at the same time make the roads safe. At once he climbs the mountain to the valley, preaches a God of love and charity, destroys the idol, and raises an altar to the living God. Then he founds a hospice at the highest spot, associating some good brothers with him in the work, to frighten the wicked and to tame the ferocity of the inhabitants of these wild regions. He and the good brothers offer hospitality to the pilgrims, dividing with them their bread, and they assist people who would otherwise be frozen by the terrible snow-storms. In a word, they become the guardian angels of that frightful solitude.

The fame of these good deeds was soon borne throughout France and Italy. One name became known, one name which everybody blessed with a grateful heart. It was the name of Bernardo, the hermit of Mount Jupiter. To him applied the sick, the afflicted, the disconsolate, and he helped every one with ineffable kindness.

Among those who were drawn to the mountain by his fame were two aged people. Bent by years and fatigued by the long journey, they asked to see the hermit. He came at once, and they bowed, full of respect, while the man said in a feeble, subdued voice: "Father, Heaven gave us riches and a high position in Savoy. A son was our joy, our love, our heir, and our hope for our old age. Nothing had been neglected to make him religious and virtuous. We chose for him a wife, good, beautiful, and young, belonging to the same noble caste as himself. Everything was ready, the bride was draped in her marriage veil—but our son had gone, leaving us only this letter."

Big tears were falling from the eyes of the aged couple. The hermit sighed and lifted his gaze toward heaven. The old man went on: "From that day our happiness was gone; we have sought him, but in vain. Oh, if he were living yet, for we are near the grave. We may never see him again."

The old man's tears burst out afresh, while the priest

seemed to be making a strenuous effort to check some strong emotion.

"O, father! you alone can advise us. Some pilgrims to whom we gave hospitality in Mentone told us marvellous tales of you, and hope has given us the strength to reach you. Have pity on us! pray to God! He may at least manifest to us whether we may hope to see our beloved son again."

They wanted to kneel at his feet, but he prevented them and said, gently consoling them:

"Only Heaven can have inspired your son with such an extraordinary decision. Console yourselves, and hope, for he may return to you when you least expect him."

At that moment the aged lady, who had until then wept silently, cried out: "Oh, how wretched are the poor mothers who have importuned God for a son, who is to be the cause of such cruel sufferings!"

The pious Bernardo said gently: "God tried Abraham's heart, and his faith saved him. If He tried you, do not murmur. The Christian must bear his cross."

The hermit was fighting a battle with his own heart. He feared that the strength of these aged ones would not support a longer talk. Begging them to wait, he hurried to the church, and knelt at the altar with a fervent prayer. Meanwhile the aged couple sat waiting, fearing, hoping, uncertain, yet with a vague presentiment.

"Vain hopes!" exclaimed the father.

"But let it be of good omen," said the mother. "Let him at least tell me that I may see my adored son before I die."

Thus they sat, watching the door by which the hermit had left and trembling at every noise. At last he came, his face full of an overpowering joy:

"Be consoled! Your son lives. He left you only to follow the voice of his conscience."

So saying, his eyes fill with tears, and no longer able to check the emotion which holds his heart, he ex-

tends his arms, looks lovingly upon them and says: "I am your son Bernardo!"

The mother gives a cry of joy; the father springs up, and soon the tears of sorrow have changed into tears of happiness, and Bernardo is held in the loving arms of his father and mother.

After having given many days to the pleasure of relating to each other the story of the cares and sorrows of the past and to enjoying the reunion, the old couple returned to their home, and Bernardo to his high charge and his beneficent work.

Meanwhile the hospice was flourishing, and to make it a perpetual institution, he went to Rome in 1008, to beg the Pope's protection. He started joyfully upon his return from the Eternal City, with the desired mandate, but it was not given to him to see his beloved Alp again. A sudden illness seized him at Novara, and he surrendered his beautiful soul to God, with that supreme serenity which comes from a duty done. He had ceased to be, but his work was accomplished, and it continues to this day, while in his honor Mount Jupiter has been named Mount San Bernardo.

This mountain lies between the valleys of Entremonte and Aosta. The famous hospice is situated upon one of the most practicable passes, and gives hospitality to all travellers, from the proud prince to the poorest tramp. The pious monks of the hospice and their strong, faithful dogs go in search of the tired and freezing pilgrims, and usually succeed in saving them. These touching scenes are renewed every year in the cold season; but the most marvellous sight ever witnessed up there was on May 16, 1800, when Father Luigi Luder was superior of the hospice. On that day, it gave hospitality to eighty thousand men, with thirty-eight cannon and other baggage. It was the French army which was descending into Italy, a few days previous to the battle of Marengo.

"When one wishes to write a great work," says Goethe, "it is best to consult no one." The same rule would seem to apply, not only to the painting of pictures, but to the exhibition of them after they are finished. The unconscious testimony of the unfortunate "Galimard" is borne to this effect, by the pen of Charles Leroy, and is translated from the French for ROMANCE by Fanny A. Weston.

BEFORE THE SALON.

GALIMARD is an artist, and one year he decided to exhibit something. The picture on its completion enchanted him; it had been painted in the strictest seclusion, for fear the idea might be stolen, but now that the time for sending it in has arrived, that anxiety is removed, and he invites two friends to inspect his work.

First friend: "Ah! ah! so that's the thing, is it? By Jove, but it's good, old fellow!"

Second friend: "Hurrah for the dog! Where did you get your idea?"

Galimard: "Oh! it's quite a long story. I was coming back from Nanterre one day, and from the car-window I saw this garden, with the children playing among the trees and the big dog running and jumping around them. The thing so fascinated me that I went back on foot, made several studies, and here you are!"

First friend: "My dear boy, it's a fine piece of work."

Second friend: "It's simple, but you've hit it just right. Where did you find the youngsters?"

Galimard: "They are my little nephews."

First friend: "There is one little thing I notice, though. Do you mind my speaking of it?"

Galimard: "Why, of course not. One cannot always judge of effects one's self. Good advice is always welcome."

Second friend: "Especially a friend's advice."

First friend: "Well then, old fellow, your sky is a trifle too clear. You should cloud it a little."

Galimard: "Do you think so?"

First friend: "Yes, because you see you didn't pose your brats out-of-doors, and they haven't the—you catch what I mean?"

Galimard: "Yes, yes, let me see; a little smudge of cloud right here, perhaps; well, if you think——"

Second friend: "Oh, yes, my dear boy, yes—and put one in here, too."

First friend: "That youngster there is hit off to the life, isn't he, Chose?"

Second friend: "Seems to me he has a sort of frightened look. If I were Galimard, I would take away the other one, the one who's laughing, because you can't see what he's laughing at. Don't you think so, Machin?"

First friend: "Oh, he could leave the one who's laughing if he liked, and take away the frightened one, for, as you say, they don't correspond—one or the other would have to go."

Galimard: "Why! I thought they were rather effective, the two contrasting faces."

Second friend: "That's all very well, my dear boy; but then it ceases to be a picture. It is simply a study of heads, of grimaces."

First friend: "He's right; take out the laughing boy. Besides, he isn't as well done as the other. He looks just a little bit like a monkey."

Galimard: "But you see, that one all alone——"

First friend: "I agree with you perfectly; but this is what you could do: to explain his fright, let the house be burning up; he could be running away from the fire."

Second friend: "Good! That's a capital idea; but in that case he would have to take away the trees, otherwise you couldn't see——"

Galimard: "But that changes my whole picture. I would rather leave in the laughing one."

Second friend: "Oh, of course, if you like—only what in the world is he laughing at? Besides, if you wanted to make him your principal subject, you should have put him in the foreground."

First friend: "The fact is that over there in that corner where the dog is the perspective is not at all clear,

and then your house is all mixed up with the trees in the foreground. You ought to put your trees behind."

Second friend: "Or take them away altogether; that would free the house."

Galimard: "But you see, if I only leave one child——"

Second friend: "I have an idea. Will you allow me——? Take out the house and trees and put them off there in the background, leave the frightened boy where he is, and make a lion rush down upon him from a mountain. Your sky is warm, the whole thing will look like an African scene."

Galimard: "A great idea! But how about the costume?"

First friend: "Oh! that's simple enough; Chose is right, you'd have a superb effect there. All you have to do is to dress the little fellow like a Bedouin; come to think of it, you should make him larger, a young man, in fact."

Second friend: "Or an old man with a gray beard."

First friend: "Oh, I'll tell you what would be stunning! A negro with snow-white hair. You'd make a sensation then, and no mistake."

Galimard: "Yes, but that's entirely departing from my subject."

First friend: "Not necessarily; only altering it a little. Make your negro nude. In that way you'd have a fine relief effect, and it would be strange indeed if your picture did not create a stir."

Galimard: "I would never have believed——"

First friend: "Well, you see, you asked our opinion, and, being friends, we gave it to you."

When his two friends have left, Galimard hurries off to consult others.

One alteration after another is suggested, until finally he is advised by some to change the subject of his picture to a "Cab-stand," or the "Arrival of an Excursion Train"; and by others, to the "Wreck of the Méduse," the "Execution of Louis XVI.," etc., etc.

In short, Galimard never exhibited at all, because in the end he became insane.

Romances of the ocean have always a flavor of their own. The love which can endure sea-water is, like color, pretty sure to hold fast. Here is the tale of such a passion, amusingly told by V. E. Agnoletti, and translated for ROMANCE by Alex Howard.

THE SWIMMING-MASTER.

I.

At Milan, not long ago, lived two families, who shall be known in these pages as T. and C. They entertained the same feeling toward each other that the Capulets and Montagues did for one another, some centuries back. Now, as then, there was a daughter of the house of C. and, on the other side, a fine youth to carry down the name of T. Of course, these young people followed in the steps of their prototypes, and loved each other with a truly Romeo-and-Juliet ardor.

II.

The family feud did not in any way affect the young lady and her swain, unless, indeed, to augment their fervor. They loved each other. How often, at the Biffi concerts, an interchange of glances had conveyed this information from one to the other; and at the races too, where they frequently met, they had managed to tell each other that henceforth they lived for one another only. It is as difficult to conceal love as it is a cough; hence, almost before they realized it, their secret was known to all their acquaintances and, incidentally, to their parents. It seemed for the time as if the world must come to an end. The news caused the father of the young man almost a cerebral congestion. The mother of the young lady received such a shock upon hearing the tidings that the celebrated nerve-specialist, Todeschini, was sent for in post haste. The relatives, all the family connections, in short, joined

forces to impede, if possible, further hostile demonstration between the two houses, but to no purpose. Then Monsignor C. of the cathedral, a friend to both of these illustrious families, tried to throw oil on the troubled waters. He did not succeed. In vain the young pair threw themselves, in orthodox fashion, at the feet of their parents, to implore the not unusual pardon, and obtain at the same time the consent to their marriage, which, as they were both minors, the law compelled them to obtain. The old people were inexorable, absolutely unyielding. Meantime, June, with all its summer warmth, arrived. No better excuse was needed now for the ascendants to separate, so to speak, the descendants. The lover apparently submitted to his fate with resignation; for he got his traps together, and started over the St. Gothard for Switzerland, as he was ordered to do. The fair one, in her turn, followed her mamma, now very much on the alert, to the seashore.

III.

All Milan was excited at this tame ending of the affair, and exclaimed in chorus: "Well, well! and only a little while ago, they were so wrapped up in each other that it seemed as if they could not exist apart, and now just see with what indifference they have accepted the situation! Serious love is indeed out of fashion, something to read about, maybe; but not to live up to, in this day,—oh, no!"

The next scene found mother and daughter by the sea, at a fashionable resort, where, needless to add, they were the most brilliant stars in its bright firmament. The heroine of this little tale seemed already to have passed from the joy of love to that of the sea; a not unnatural transition, perhaps, for is there not a relationship between the two, since the mother of Love is the daughter of the Sea? The soft roses of beauty returned to her fresh young cheeks, and she appeared no longer to even remember her absent lover. Indeed, she had apparently quite changed her purpose, and in-

stead of the school of matrimony, had undoubtedly dedicated herself to that of swimming. The lovely Milanese seemed now only bent on rivaling the graces of the ancient naiads.

The clever mother, meantime, looked on approvingly, thinking: "These gymnastics will drive all the nonsense out of her head, and anyway, I should much prefer to see Ida a good swimmer than the daughter-in-law of that disagreeable old Count T., who has neither my ambition nor my quarterings."

Consequently, the marchioness put the young lady under the special care of the old swimming teacher, the white-bearded Andrea. But, curiously enough, Ida did not learn to swim, notwithstanding her frequent exercise in this art. As long as she kept near the shore, she got on very well; but once out a little way, she would sink, and the chances are that, if old Andrea had not stayed close by all the time, she would have made acquaintance with the bottom of the Mediterranean at the beginning of the season.

IV.

One day the marchioness sat near the shore, under a leafy acacia. The young marchioness, altogether adorable in her abbreviated bathing-costume, was swimming out with unusual audacity, and Papa Andrea, his white beard floating on the surface, held her up with one arm. A wave half-lifted her from the water —a second turned her completely round—a third passed over her—a fourth buried her from sight! Beside herself with terror, the mother gave a scream which brought half the bathing colony to her side in an instant, while she cried out: "My daughter is drowning! My life, all that I possess, to any one who will save her! Help, help!"

Before she had finished speaking, Andrea had dived under the water; the old man seemed in an instant to have recovered his strength. With their hearts in their mouths, those on shore stood perfectly still; not a sound was heard, save the distracting sobs of this modern

Niobe, and the infinite echo of the sonorous ocean. Four hundred eyes were fixed in one direction, at the point where first the young girl, and then the swimming-master, had disappeared into a watery abyss.

V.

Another moment of suspense, and then the submerged pair rose to the surface again. They were clasped in an almost frantic embrace. Evidently they were breasting the waves with the superhuman strength of two people brought back from the very gates of death. Andrea held the white-faced girl tightly about the waist, while with his free arm he struck out for shore.

A shout of joy greeted them, turning suddenly into one of indescribable surprise, however, as they came nearer land. When they were a few rods only from the beach, the surprise there became mute astonishment. Andrea, the old man, had undergone a wonderful metamorphosis. The waves of the blue Mediterranean had sprinkled his face with the sweet waters of eternal youth. In fact, one wave had carried away his white beard, and a second his wig; his hair now was black and curly. This old man, unexpectedly grown young, was holding the pretty young marchioness closely, almost desperately, to his heart—a clasp, in short, which bespoke the lover rather than the life-preserver.

They reached the shore. The summer colony understood at a glance, then, how and why old Andrea had become young Count T., and a salvo of applause, echoed in every heart, even by the staunchest upholders of implacable escutcheons, greeted him.

VI.

Two hours later—the young marchioness having meanwhile completely recovered from the shock—a conversation between the Marchioness C. and young Count T. was drawing to a close something after this fashion:

"I do not wish to judge your conduct," the marchioness was saying, "but you must accept its consequences, Count. I tell you, therefore, that no man in the world

—save her husband—shall have the right to boast that he embraced my daughter in the presence of two hundred people—no, not even if it were to save her from certain death. Hence the rest is understood, and notwithstanding that your coat of arms is very inferior to mine in its number of quarterings, my daughter can accept no other suitor than yourself, provided always that you are in a position to marry her."

"Dear marchioness, I have at length attained my majority. I am of age, and at liberty therefore to marry without my parents' consent. It is not even necessary for me to consult any one in the matter. I am sure of my mother's property, anyway; for that was left to me unconditionally, and it is enough for us."

VII.

At this stage of the proceedings I deem further details useless. Suffice it to say that the swimming-school was broken up, and the betrothed returned to Milan, where, before the end of July, the banns were published.

So I close, with best wishes to the swimming-master and his bride!